

care system is for physicians and other providers of health care, such as pharmacists, physical therapists, and providers of durable medical equipment, to install health information technology systems.

□ 1130

Electronic medical records have proven to be an effective tool in reducing medical errors and eliminating unnecessary medical procedures. However, health information technology systems are extremely expensive, particularly for the numerous small businesses such as solo physician practitioners in rural areas to purchase and install such systems.

H.R. 3014 addresses this issue by providing loan guarantees by the Small Business Administration to health care providers that install health information technology systems. The loan process will operate in a manner identical to that of the SBA's 7(a) loan guarantee program. Thus, fees will be charged to borrowers and lenders as they are in the 7(a) loan program.

Testimony before the committee revealed that it takes anywhere from 1 to 3 years for physicians and other health care providers to reach the level of efficiency that they operated with under handwritten systems. Recognizing this, H.R. 3014 authorizes a deferral period in repayment of 1 to 3 years. While there is an additional cost associated with such deferral, this small incentive will pay for itself many times through an increase in efficiency of the health care system without undertaking a government capture of the health care market.

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

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield as much time as she may consume to the lead sponsor of this bill, the gentlelady from Pennsylvania (Mrs. DAHLKEMPER).

Mrs. DAHLKEMPER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Small Business Health Information Technology Financing Act. This legislation is a vital piece to lowering the health care costs of our country, and a key to making health technology accessible to small business health companies.

While we talk about the high price of health care to hospitals and consumers, we often forget that most doctors and pharmacists work in small groups or as individual health care providers. These small medical businesses are dramatically affected by administrative burdens, which can translate to higher health care costs for their patients.

My legislation creates an affordable path for these providers to make the investment in health information technologies that lower the cost of health care for their patients and for their businesses.

Rural communities, like many of those in my district, often rely on only a few health care providers in the area. These providers—independent phar-

macists, doctors and allied health professionals—struggle to continue providing their services when they do not have the infrastructure and support of bigger hospitals or other facilities. Doctors and practitioners with small practices work tirelessly to keep communities healthy at the most basic level, but the costs to do so can be overwhelming.

The Small Business Health Information Technology Financing Act creates a new loan guarantee program at the SBA that would allow these small pharmacies, small doctors and allied professional offices to purchase health information technology that would drastically improve their businesses and potentially lower the costs to patients. The loan guarantee programs provides a 90 percent guarantee on loan amounts up to \$350,000 for an individual practitioner and \$2 million for a group to purchase cost-saving information technologies which are often too expensive an investment for a small business.

Mr. Speaker, the Small Business Health Information Technology Financing Act will not only lower the administrative costs of health care, it will help bolster small businesses by allowing them access to modern and efficient technologies. My legislation creates an affordable loan program for these providers to make the investment in health information technologies that lower the cost of health care for everyone and improve the health of all. I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this small business legislation.

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I don't have any other speakers. I would just like to say that I appreciate the chairwoman's work on this bill and incorporating ideas from our side into this bill. As always, the bipartisan work of the committee is very much noticed and I appreciate that.

I would yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. I have an additional speaker. I will yield as much time as he may consume to the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. LANGEVIN).

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

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlelady for yielding, and I want to commend the sponsor of this act before us today.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3014, the Small Business Health Information Technology Financing Act. As this Congress is moving aggressively to solve our Nation's health care crisis by establishing universal health care, we are going to have to move aggressively also to look at ways of controlling costs. That really is one of the vital reasons why we have to overhaul our Nation's health care system. Health information technology will be a vital part of the effort to both improve quality and cut costs.

But, of course, with this there will be an up-front cost that many doctors, in particular, are going to have to absorb. We have to work aggressively, I believe, to try to support them in this transition to adopt these new health information technologies. Again, many of these doctors are just, if you will, small businesses themselves. Today, the Congress is debating several bills supporting small business.

In order to create jobs we absolutely have to look to small businesses. In many ways they are the backbone of our economy. Certainly in my home State of Rhode Island that's true, with 96 percent of employers being small businesses. My constituents right now are struggling with a heavy burden of 13 percent unemployment in a State whose recession began almost a year earlier than most of its neighbors, and the need for job creation could not be more urgent.

Many of the new jobs we need will be created through new business endeavors, and that's why this legislation and other pieces of small business legislation that we're debating today are so important. By looking at new business models, we will better target the needs of our communities. We need to help our small businesses grow, keep people employed, and train them for new, sustainable jobs. American prosperity clearly depends on the success of small businesses and the innovative spirit of the American people. I'm certainly committed to bringing relief to Main Street and small businesses that are struggling in our State. Certainly, doctors, as I said, many of them are small businesses themselves, and helping them with the up-front cost of adopting this health information technology will assist them to stay in business. And particularly, as we try to grow our primary care system, this will become more and more important.

I commend the gentlelady for introducing the legislation. I am proud to support it, as I am proud to support all of our small businesses and helping them to stay in business and grow jobs.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. 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 New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3014, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3791, FIRE GRANTS RE-AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2009

Ms. PINGREE of Maine. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 909 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 909

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. 3791) to amend sections 33 and 34 of the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974, 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 chair 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. 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 recommended by the Committee on Science and Technology now printed in the bill modified by the amendment 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 such 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. 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. 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. The Chair may entertain a motion that the Committee rise only if offered by the chair of the Committee on Science and Technology or his designee. The Chair may not entertain a motion to strike out the enacting words of the bill (as described in clause 9 of rule XVIII).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from Maine is recognized for 1 hour.

Ms. PINGREE of Maine. Mr. Speaker, for the purposes of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER). All time yielded during consideration of the rule is for debate only. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. PINGREE of Maine. I also ask unanimous consent that all Members be given 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on House Resolution 909.

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

There was no objection.

Ms. PINGREE of Maine. Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 909 provides a structured rule for consideration of H.R. 3791, the Fire Grants Reauthorization Act of 2009. The rules waive all points of order against consideration of the bill except those arising under clause 9 or 10 of rule XXI. The rule provides 1 hour of general debate equally divided and controlled by the Committee on Science and Technology. The rule provides that the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Science and Technology Committee modified by the amendment printed in part A of the Rules Committee report shall be considered as adopted and shall be considered as read. The rule waives all points of order against the substitute amendment, except those arising under clause 10 of rule XXI. The rule makes in order the amendments printed in part B of the Rules Committee report and waives all points of order against such amendments except those arising under clause 9 or 10 of rule XXI. The rule makes in order all five of the amendments submitted for consideration. The Chair may not entertain a motion to rise unless offered by the Chair of the Committee on Science and Technology or his designee, and may not entertain a motion to strike the enacting clause.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 3791 reauthorizes funding for two vital programs that support our local firefighters and our communities: the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) program and the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant program. These two programs go hand in hand by providing assistance that keeps local fire departments prepared and able to respond, while assuring that each department is adequately staffed to meet the needs of the community. The AFG program provides funding for local fire departments to purchase equipment, vehicles and training, and the SAFER grants program helps local departments maintain and hire firefighters.

The success of both programs has been indisputable and their impacts have been felt in each of our districts. Since 2001, the AFG program has provided over \$4.8 billion in funding to local fire departments to purchase emergency response training and equipment. Since 2004, the SAFER program has competitively awarded \$700 million to local departments for hiring, recruitment and retention of fire fighters. The effect of both programs can be simply stated. Each dollar saves lives and jobs.

While this funding has been essential, the unmet needs of our local departments remain staggering. In fiscal year 2008, the Federal Emergency Management Agency received over 20,000 applications from fire departments requesting over \$3 billion. In the same fiscal year, FEMA also received over 1,000 applications for SAFER grants, requesting over \$500 million. The National

Fire Protection Association estimates that 65 percent of fire departments in the United States do not have enough portable radios to equip all firefighters, and that 36 percent of all fire departments involved in emergency medical responses do not have enough adequately trained personnel to respond to these emergencies.

The numbers speak for themselves. During these tough economic times, the needs of our local fire departments have been exacerbated and local resources have been stretched to the breaking point. Communities in rural areas, which have always been strapped for resources and struggled to compete for Federal funds, have been hit exceptionally hard by this economic downturn.

□ 1145

In Portland, Maine, one of the more urban areas that I represent, nine firefighters in the Portland region were recently laid off due to significant budget cuts. But the local unions stepped up and unanimously stood up to support their laid-off colleagues out of their own pay checks.

While this is a great example of people pulling together during tough times, and it may exemplify part of what we admire about first responders, this is simply an unacceptable solution. The Federal Government has no higher charge than to provide for the common protection and the common good of its citizens and to support this work at the local level. It is time to reinvest in our emergency responders and renew our commitment to these critical programs.

This funding is also critical in rural towns across the country. Raymond, Maine, in my district, for example, is a town of less than 5,000 residents and a fire department that is mostly made up of volunteers. In 2008 when they realized that their SCBAs, self-contained breathing apparatus, on all of their trucks were outdated and didn't meet the current requirements, they turned to this program. And thanks to a \$150,000 grant, Raymond, Maine, was able to purchase the equipment they so desperately needed. Stories like this are now more common because of the SAFER program.

The safety of our homes and our neighborhoods has never been a partisan issue, and the bravery and service of our local fire departments has never been in question. This is clearly demonstrated by the broad bipartisan support for this bill and the strong endorsements from the International Association of Firefighters and the National Volunteer Fire Council.

I look forward to the passage of this important legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from North Haven for yielding me the customary 30 minutes, and I yield myself such time as I might consume.

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

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, my Rules Committee colleague has pointed at the fact that this is a bipartisan measure. Dealing with issues of firefighting obviously transcend partisanship in every way. And this is a very, very important measure that will, in fact, have, I suspect, unanimous support here on the House floor. She has outlined appropriately the two grant programs, the Assistance to Firefighters program which will provide \$12.2 billion, and the SAFER program which will provide \$1 billion in assistance. And I believe that this is a measure which is critically important as we look at the challenges of the Federal Government's role in dealing with firefighting.

Mr. Speaker, this past August 26 was a devastating day in southern California history. We saw the largest fire in Los Angeles County history burn 160,000 acres. It was a horrible, horrible time, because above all of it, we lost two courageous firefighters, Captain Ted Hall and Specialist Arnie Quinones. And when one thinks about where it is that we are going on this issue, it is critical that we do every single thing that we can for the brave men and women who are firefighters.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think it's important for us to never forget what it is that happened in Los Angeles or in other fires. There was a memorial service that was held at Dodgers Stadium several weeks ago. And I was struck at that service with the fact that firefighters stood up and said that the one thing that continues to happen is that while the populace at large may have a tendency to forget these things, firefighters never, ever forget their own. And that is why there is a redoubling of the commitment to the spouses, the children and other family members of Captain Ted Hall and Specialist Arnie Quinones.

This program is important, and it has a Federal component, I believe, in large part due to the fact that the area that burned just above La Canada, California, is an area that consists of the Angeles National Forest, which is Federal land. So I hope very much that we are able to proceed in a bipartisan way in dealing with this issue.

If you think about the sacrifice that is made, on average 75,000 firefighters are injured every single year, and on average 100 firefighters are killed every single year as they are proceeding with their very, very important work. That is why this program will, I believe, go a long way towards diminishing the loss of life and the threat to those people and at the same time diminish the threat of fire overall.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as important as this issue is, and my friend from North Haven has pointed to the fact that it is bipartisan, I believe this measure should be considered under either suspension of the rules, because while the five amendments that were offered were made in order, I'm convinced that under the able leadership of the com-

mittee of jurisdiction, there could have been an agreement that would have allowed this to come up with 20 minutes of debate. Just as the last measures that we have considered were considered under suspension of the rules, this very easily could have. But since it's not, it obviously should be considered under an open amendment process.

Now it's very sad that we have gone through this entire Congress, this entire Congress without a single open rule. And that is, I think, a very, very unfortunate thing. It is a step forward that every amendment submitted upstairs to the Rules Committee was made in order. But why not consider it under an open amendment process which would allow any rank-and-file Member to stand up and offer an amendment to this legislation?

So I also have to say that the amount of time that we are expending on this is, I believe, not necessary in light of the fact that as important as it is, it enjoys strong bipartisan support, as both of us have said.

I believe that the American people want us to be doing here, Mr. Speaker, is focusing on jobs, jobs, jobs. We all know that when the stimulus package, the \$787 billion stimulus package passed, President Obama said that its passage would ensure that we would not see an unemployment rate that would exceed 8 percent.

We all know that today, tragically, the unemployment rate is at 10.2 percent. In my State of California, it's 12.2 percent. In some of the areas that I represent around Los Angeles, it's up over 14 percent. And that's why what we should be doing is focusing on issues that will create jobs so that those individuals who are losing their homes and losing their small businesses are not going to continue to suffer.

Now what should we be doing? At this moment, President Obama is in Seoul, South Korea. And we know that denuclearizing the Korean peninsula is obviously a high priority. But just as was discussed when President Obama was in Beijing, similarly in Seoul, the priority issue being discussed is the U.S.-Korea free trade agreement.

Now there are a lot of people, Mr. Speaker, who say, why, when you're dealing with economic difficulties would you possibly consider embarking on a free-trade agreement? Well, guess what? There are very important reasons. The main reason is that it's one of the most important ways that we can create jobs right here in the United States of America.

Let's take just a moment, and I wish we were debating this agreement which has been completed, similarly the Colombia and the Panama agreements have been completed which would be job creators right here in the United States. Automobiles, the automobile industry is hurting in the United States, and we know that there is this massive disparity between the number of automobiles going from the United States of America being sold in Korea,

that number is actually just under 10,000, and the number of Korean automobiles that are sold in the United States; 700,000 Korean automobiles are purchased by Americans.

Now I think everyone should have a right to buy the best quality product at the lowest possible price, but I believe we should do everything that we can to have an opportunity to create more jobs here in the United States of America in the automobile industry and every other industry that is tied to that, by creating a market opening, a market-opening vehicle for us in South Korea.

Now, people ask, well, why would you want to do an agreement that would make that happen? The reason is very simple. The tariff is higher on U.S. automobiles going into South Korea than it is on Korean vehicles coming into the United States by and large. And even more important than that, Mr. Speaker, there is a tax and regulatory structure that exists in South Korea that prevents us from being able to sell those cars. So, again, fewer than 10,000 American-made automobiles are sold in South Korea today; and we purchase 700,000 cars and trucks from there.

So what should we do? We should pass this free-trade agreement, pass this free-trade agreement which will create jobs right here in the United States of America and, I believe, go a long way towards dealing with the devastating 10.2 percent unemployment rate that we have. We can, we can implement job-creating economic growth policies. Unfortunately, based on the track record that we've seen over this past year, we haven't. So people are hurting. It's very important for us to pass this legislation which could be considered either under suspension of the rules or under an open amendment process, which unfortunately it isn't; and we could spend our time passing policies that will help the American worker.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. PINGREE of Maine. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for all of the many topics he brought up this morning. I'm sure he and I will have another time when we get to discuss the trade issues in this country. And I also appreciate that there will be time in our committee to talk about the issues around amendments and open rules.

I will say that there are job components, particularly in this bill when I brought up the firefighters in Portland, Maine, who had recently lost their jobs and are now helping some of their brethren with their own paychecks. I know that funding through this helps many of our firefighters to maintain their service. I do want to also say, I know we all extended our sympathy at the time, but I appreciated that you spoke to us about the extreme fire issues in your district. And I also want

to send my sympathies to those firefighters who are lost and their families. And I know that was a perilous time.

I appreciate the fact that while I represent a very rural district, even in your urban district, we have very many similarities of issues that we have to deal with.

I would now like to yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. SUTTON).

Ms. SUTTON. I thank the gentlewoman for the time, and I thank her for her leadership on behalf of our firefighters and on behalf of all those out there who are fighting for jobs and for her leadership in taking us to a place today to bring this bill to the floor.

I rise today in support of H.R. 3791, the Fire Grants Reauthorization Act. Our communities desperately need this bill. We need to be able to keep our firefighters on the job and keep our constituents and communities safe. So this is all about jobs and the safety and well-being of those whom we are so honored to represent.

I'm pleased, too, with many of the changes that have been made to the Firefighters Grant programs, that H.R. 3791 sets aside specific percentages of the assistance to firefighter grants for career fire departments, combination departments and volunteer fire departments.

Currently, there is no statutory language guaranteeing professional fire departments a minimum percentage of funding. So I'm also pleased that we are including economic hardship waiver language in this bill. This language will, for the first time, work to address some of the devastating effects we have seen in this recession. It will allow that the local matching fund requirements be waived also. It allows the requirement that departments use the SAFER grants to supplement, rather than replace, local funds to be waived. It allows the requirement that departments use the funds to hire additional firefighters rather than retain existing personnel to be waived.

That's what we're passing today, and that is what we passed earlier in the year. However, I'm deeply concerned that the SAFER grant guidance recently released by the Department of Homeland Security does not reflect congressional intent or the sacrifices made by local fire departments in some significant ways.

This bill makes it clear that our intent is to allow SAFER grants to be used to retain firefighters, as well, during the worst recession since the Great Depression. Many firefighters in my congressional district and across the country have made very difficult decisions to take pay cuts and make other sacrifices to avoid layoffs—for now. But their shared sacrifice may work against them when applying for these grants under the current guidelines. And it's my opinion and it is our intent, congressional intent, that they should not be penalized from accessing

these grants that can keep them working.

□ 1200

Our firefighters sacrifice so much for our safety and should not be punished for sacrificing during the recession to stay on the job to protect our communities and one another.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. I was sorry my friend from North Haven didn't want to yield to me. I was simply going to tell her that I completely concurred with her argument that the job creation that will focus on firefighters is a very, very important thing, and I support that.

Ms. PINGREE of Maine. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. DREIER. Of course. I'm always happy to yield to my friend.

Ms. PINGREE of Maine. I just want to say to my good friend from California, I apologize for not yielding earlier, and I appreciate your comments.

Mr. DREIER. Let me say that the notion of discussing a wide range of issues as I did, talking about the critical importance of the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program of \$1.2 billion and the SAFER Program of an additional billion dollars, is critical—and we support that. We support that very enthusiastically. But President Obama is at this point in Korea, and that is what led me to talk about the importance of our dealing with job creation.

As I talk to my constituents, Mr. Speaker—jobs, jobs, jobs—that is the message that continues to come through loudly and clearly. And the notion of expanding private-sector jobs is something that I believe we should be encouraging through improved tax and regulatory policy, bringing about marginal rate reduction, decreasing the regulatory burden and, Mr. Speaker, opening up new opportunities for U.S. workers here in the United States of America, which is exactly what is being said to President Obama as he meets in Korea at this moment with their leadership, with President Lee and others. And so I think that we need to have our attention in this Congress focused on the priority that the American people have.

Firefighting is very, very important. But, again, this measure will pass—if not unanimously, nearly unanimously—and it will do so, and I hope get the resources to ensure that we never have the loss of life, as I said, of Captain Hall and Specialist Quinones, and others. But I know from having spoken to their families, Mr. Speaker, that they believe that it's absolutely essential for us to encourage private-sector job creation and economic growth, and that's why I'm talking about this priority that needs to be addressed here.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to urge my colleagues to defeat the previous question as we move ahead. Why? Because the issue of reading legislation is another very, very important one that is

before us. There is a bipartisan proposal launched by Messrs. BAIRD and CULBERSON, supported by Mr. DENT and others, a bipartisan measure which will allow us to, if we defeat the previous question and debate that measure, which calls for 72 hours for the reading of legislation before we bring it to the floor.

I suspect that my colleague from North Haven has heard, just as I, that the American people believe that we should read legislation before it comes to the House floor. Right now, we regularly waive the 72-hour, 3-day layover requirement.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to urge my colleagues to defeat the previous question. It will not in any way impinge on our ability to move ahead and pass this very important legislation dealing with firefighting. At the same time, it will do something else that the American people have been asking us, and that is to read, review, and consider legislation in a very deliberative manner, which is exactly what the framers of our Constitution wanted us to do.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. PINGREE of Maine. At this moment I have no other speakers. I would inquire whether the gentleman is ready to yield back his time.

Mr. DREIER. Let me yield myself such time as I might consume to close by simply saying this is very good and important legislation. It needs to pass. It's being considered, unbelievably, under a structured amendment process. It enjoys strong bipartisan support and should pass with that.

I think we should be focusing our attention, as I said, on job creation and economic growth, which is what the American people want us to be spending our time doing here rather than taking a long period of time to debate an issue on which we all agree.

So I urge my colleagues to vote “no” on the previous question so that we can consider the bipartisan Baird-Culberson language that would allow us to read legislation before it's considered here over the 72-hour period of time.

If by chance—if by chance—the previous question is not defeated and we don't have an opportunity to debate that very important legislation that will allow us to have the 3-day layover, I will urge my colleagues to vote “no” on the rule so that we can come back with an open amendment process, which is another very, very important part of the transparency message which should be coming through.

AMENDMENT TO H. RES. 909 OFFERED BY MR.

DREIER

At the end of the resolution, insert the following new section:

SEC. 3. On the third legislative day after the adoption of this resolution, immediately after the third daily order of business under clause 1 of rule XIV and without intervention of any point of order, the House shall proceed to the consideration of the resolution (H. Res. 554) amending the Rules of the

House of Representatives to require that legislation and conference reports be available on the Internet for 72 hours before consideration by the House, and for other purposes. The resolution shall be considered as read. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the resolution and any amendment thereto to final adoption without intervening motion or demand for division of the question except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Rules; (2) an amendment, if offered by the Minority Leader or his designee and if printed in that portion of the Congressional Record designated for that purpose in clause 8 of rule XVIII at least one legislative day prior to its consideration, which shall be in order without intervention of any point of order or demand for division of the question, shall be considered as read and shall be separately debatable for twenty minutes equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent; and (3) one motion to recommit which shall not contain instructions. Clause 1(c) of rule XIX shall not apply to the consideration of House Resolution 554.

(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.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. PINGREE of Maine. I thank my colleague for co-managing this rule. I appreciate his concerns about jobs. I know it's a top priority for our caucus and one we will be talking about in the coming weeks and days. I want to finish my remarks by focusing on the important contribution of firefighters.

Mr. Speaker, the fire service in this country is being asked to do more than ever before—from hazmat response and safety planning for schools to EMT duties and homeland security responsibilities. These days, fire departments do much more than spray water on burning buildings. Or, as one of my firefighter friends says, much more than "putting the wet stuff on the red stuff." These increased responsibilities are why these programs are so vitally important.

My home State of Maine has used these programs to great success. During fiscal year 2008, Maine received almost \$5 million in AFG funding and close to \$1 million in SAFER grants. But these numbers alone do not tell the whole story. The real success of these programs is told through the stories of those whose lives have been saved and those whose jobs have been preserved.

In 2005, a Maine fire department received an AFG grant to purchase smoke alarms and install those in homes that did not meet the level of protection recommended by the National Fire Protection Association. Just 2 months after the local fire department began installing the smoke alarms, firefighters were called to a house where smoke had been detected in the basement. The family of six living in the home was awakened by a smoke alarm and they were able to escape before any of them suffered a serious injury. The smoke alarm had been bought and installed with funding from the AFG program.

The town of Saco, Maine, recently used these programs to install an exhaust system for the fire station so the building doesn't fill up with diesel exhaust every time the fire trucks start up. And the town of Brunswick, a community facing the challenges of a Navy

base closure, the department was able to hire critically needed firefighters thanks to a SAFER grant.

But, Mr. Speaker, I think some of the real success stories lie in our rural communities, communities often staffed by volunteer fire departments. Just like bigger communities, those small-town fire departments are being asked to do more, but acquiring the equipment they need is often beyond the scope of small-town municipal budgets. Through these programs, small-town volunteer fire departments in my State have been able to acquire the turnout coats, the breathing apparatus, and the hazmat suits to do the job effectively and safely.

Mr. Speaker, I am a proud cosponsor of this bill and I will continue to be a strong supporter of the men and women who put their lives on the line to keep our businesses, our homes, and our communities safe.

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 SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. JACKSON of Illinois). 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. DREIER. 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, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

PROVIDING FOR AN ADJOURNMENT OR RECESS OF THE TWO HOUSES

Ms. PINGREE of Maine. Mr. Speaker, I send to the desk a privileged concurrent resolution and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the concurrent resolution, as follows:

H. CON. RES. 214

Resolved by the House or Representatives (the Senate concurring), That when the House adjourns on the legislative day of Thursday, November 19, 2009, or Friday, November 20, 2009, on a motion offered pursuant to this concurrent resolution by its Majority Leader or his designee, it stand adjourned until 2 p.m. on Tuesday, December 1, 2009, or until the time of any reassembly pursuant to section 2 of this concurrent resolution, whichever occurs first; and that when the Senate recesses or adjourns on any day from Friday, November 20, 2009, through Wednesday, November 25, 2009, on a motion offered pursuant to this concurrent resolution by its Majority Leader or his designee, it stand recessed or adjourned until noon on Monday, November 30, 2009, or such other time on that day as may be specified in the motion to recess or adjourn, or until the time of any reassembly pursuant to section 2 of this concurrent resolution, whichever occurs first.

SEC. 2. The Speaker of the House and the Majority Leader of the Senate, or their respective designees, acting jointly after consultation with the Minority Leader of the