

who are unemployed should have unemployment insurance, I don't know why I expect them to learn how they should treat the 600,000 residents who live in the District of Columbia.

I see that I've been joined on the floor by a good friend and colleague, and I want to thank Mr. ELLISON for coming to the floor and yield time to him at this time.

Mr. ELLISON. Let me thank the gentlelady from Washington, D.C.

The message I have is very short. It's based on a group of young people who visited me in my office today, all from Washington, D.C. And they are on a hunger strike and have not eaten any solid food for 8 days. I promised them that I would not eat, either, starting tonight, and will not eat for 24 hours in solidarity with their struggle. They asked me to read a statement.

The statement reads as follows: "Occupy The Vote D.C.

D.C. needs representation: Fast. Occupy the vote. Corrynf@occupydc.org.

To: Those in Congress with a vote.

Regarding: Full democracy for the citizens of D.C.

Since its creation, our Capital, the bastion of American democracy, has been handicapped from responding to the will of its citizens. Despite paying taxes to the Federal Government and sending our citizens to fight and die in every war, Washingtonians have had no voting representation in Congress, and have had to seek approval from people they did not elect on all legislative and budgetary matters. In other words, the so-called capital of the free world is America's most disenfranchised jurisdiction.

More than 200 years after the American Revolution, taxation without representation—the foundational grievance of our country—is still alive and well in our Nation's Capital. Washingtonians pay higher per capita Federal income taxes than any State, yet we have no say in how Congress spends that money.

It's true that there was a time long ago when the Capital had few residents outside of the legislators and first Federal workers, who maintained representation in their home States. But D.C. now has 600,000 taxed, yet voiceless, citizens. Not a Senator to hear them at the Hart Building, no voting Representative in the House to stand for their concerns.

Based on the founding principles of our democratic Nation, we the signees demand that Washington, D.C., have the long overdue freedoms of:

Full budgetary autonomy. Congress is overburdened and often stalemated by its responsibilities to the rest of the country. Yet, the D.C. Government cannot spend its own tax dollars without the approval of Congress. A bill proposed by Representative DARRELL ISSA would free D.C.'s local budget from congressional control. We urge Congress to pass this bill free of any riders restricting how D.C. spends its

own money. Letting D.C. take control of its own budget would free time for Congress to attend to national issues, while giving D.C. the local democracy that is given to every other American.

Full legislative autonomy. Eliminate the requirement for congressional review of new District laws. This redtape subverts democracy and adds bureaucratic inefficiency to the processes of both Congress and D.C. Government. We urge Congress to pass the District of Columbia Legislative Autonomy Act of 2011, H.R. 506.

Full representation and voting rights in Congress. The people of D.C. do not have a vote in the House or in the Senate. This deprives more than 600,000 Americans of an empowered voice in our national legislature. This unjust situation has allowed Members of Congress who were not elected by the people of the District of Columbia to impose policies upon the citizens of D.C. that are not supported by the people. We urge Congress to pass H.R. 266, the District of Columbia Equal Representation Act of 2011.

Politicians have attached riders related to abortion funding and gun ownership to past bills that would expand real democracy for D.C. residents. These riders ultimately divert the dialogue from democratic representation and further disenfranchise Washingtonians. We demand that any such riders attached to the legislation above be presented not as mandates, but as referendum proposals up for vote by the citizens of Washington, D.C.

Until D.C. realizes democracy as stipulated above, we will follow the examples of Alice Paul, Mohandas Gandhi, and Anne Hazare, and will refuse all food and consume only water in a continuous hunger strike. In a gesture of transparency, we fast here, in the open, at McPherson Square, Washington D.C., with a transparent 24-hour video livestream at occupythetotedc.tumblr.com.

To consciously disenfranchise hundreds of thousands of American citizens is unjust and contrary to this country's principles. Democracy for D.C. is not a political issue but a moral issue, not an issue of left or right but of representation and democracy. We call on President Obama, House Oversight Committee Chairman DARRELL ISSA, and the U.S. Congress to show real leadership and give the Capital of this great country the voting representation and local democracy it deserves.

In solidarity with Occupy D.C. and people's democratic movements the world over,

Signed, Adrian Parson, Sam Jewler, Joe Gray, and Kelly Mears."

I only read what they asked me to read. And I commend their struggle and will deny myself all food and all water for 24 hours starting tonight in solidarity with their struggle.

I yield back to the gentlelady and thank her for her time.

Ms. NORTON. Well, I can't thank the gentleman enough for coming to the

floor, first of all, in solidarity with the residents of the District of Columbia to read the statement in solidarity with the hunger strikers themselves. It's very important to us, and I think Mr. ELLISON's coming to the floor does say to the District of Columbia that I'm not alone here, that there are hundreds of Members, like Mr. ELLISON, for whom the issue of full democracy for the District of Columbia is a priority.

So here is a Member who is from the Midwest, from Minnesota, who takes the time because the hunger strikers have visited his office. They have visited my office, as well. They are young people doing something on their own. No one would have said to anyone else, you ought to go on a hunger strike. But it does show you the desperation that many in our city feel that among us are some who, in order to call attention to this injustice in our country, have now taken to something beyond civil disobedience, to the ultimate kind of sacrifice, when they have given up food now for 8 days.

Again, I want you to know that this is nothing that they have been asked to do, not because I asked them to do it any more than I asked the residents of the District of Columbia, the mayor and members of the city council, to be arrested in April on Capitol Hill.

□ 1630

What you have seen during the 112th Congress is spontaneous reaction from officials and residents of the District of Columbia to spontaneous injustice from this House.

Importantly in what Mr. ELLISON read was the notion of budget autonomy. The most immediate answer to the predicament we find ourselves in is the failure of Congress to acknowledge that our local budget has no business in this House.

I am very pleased that one Member, the chairman of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, Mr. ISSA, had the District before him in the form of several of our public officials and listened closely to their testimony. Their testimony, and the testimony of witnesses called by the majority Republicans, went something like this: that the District of Columbia's finances and its budget are in better shape than those of virtually any jurisdiction in the United States.

Then witnesses from both sides said that the District does incur significant problems. Those problems result from the fact that the District has to do its budget twice—first for itself, and then the Congress does its budget again. As a result, the bondholders charge the residents of the District of Columbia a premium because Congress requires the District's budget to come here.

What does the Congress do with the District's budget when it comes here? Well, it certainly wouldn't tamper with a budget that has been put together by D.C. Council subcommittees, hearing endless hours of testimony, then calling committees, then with give-and-

take from members of the council. Congress doesn't feel it's competent to do that, so what Congress does is to essentially pass the budget as it is and use the fact that the budget is here for its own purposes and against the interests of the residents of the District of Columbia. It uses the local D.C. budget to affix amendments—known as riders—to keep the District from doing what the District wants to do with its own local funds. I'm not here talking about what the District wants to do with Federal funds; it's what the District wants to do with its own local funds.

And in order to make sure that the District gets the point, the District gets shut down if the Federal Government decides to shut down. The very threat of a shutdown has repercussions for the District's finances, for those who hold its bonds, for those who hold its contracts. No city can afford that, and certainly not the District of Columbia.

As a result, this situation has not only driven our own people to civil disobedience, it has driven them to follow the example of Mahatma Gandhi who, when things got bad enough, if you saw the movie "Gandhi," would simply stop eating. People would beg him to eat, and he would stop eating. And people would say, You must eat; you're more valuable if you're alive, and he would not eat because he was trying to shame the British Government into bringing democracy to India. And he succeeded and has been, of course, the great icon of civil disobedience of various kinds.

But who would expect that public officials would have to engage in civil disobedience here? Who would ever think that a hunger strike would be necessary in the United States of America? Not for some radical principle, but for the first principle, the principle upon which this country was founded: If it's our money, we get to decide what to do with our money, King George—yes, and King Congress.

May I inquire how much time I have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman has 1 minute remaining.

Ms. NORTON. There is an answer to this, and I thank Mr. ISSA for proposing a budget autonomy bill himself that mirrors my own budget autonomy bill—with some differences to be sure, in deference to the Congress. But this is a chairman of a committee who listened to the District, listened to witnesses, understood the harm imposed on the District—not only the shutdown, not only, of course, the amendments, but he was particularly impressed by the harm it does to the finances of a city that has done the right thing by its own finances.

As we contemplate what will happen in the next few hours, we ought to find a way to do two things if we do nothing else: Make sure that the District budget passes as the District would have it—not as any Member of this House would have it—and that the abortion

amendment is gone; and, finally, that under no circumstances, whatever happens to the Federal Government, under no circumstances should the government of a local jurisdiction, your Nation's capital, be shut down.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of the Special Order by Mr. TERRY of Nebraska, as well as on the subject of the Special Order by Ms. NORTON of the District of Columbia.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia? There was no objection.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 4 o'clock and 37 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

□ 2256

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. DREIER) at 10 o'clock and 56 minutes p.m.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2055, CONSOLIDATED APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2012

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky submitted the following conference report and statement on the bill (H.R. 2055) making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2012, and for other purposes:

CONFERENCE REPORT (H. REPT. 112-331)

The committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 2055), making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2012, and for other purposes, having met, after full and free conference, have agreed to recommend and do recommend to their respective Houses as follows:

That the House recede from its disagreement to the amendment of the Senate and agree to the same with an amendment as follows:

In lieu of the matter proposed to be inserted by the Senate amendment, insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2012".

SEC. 2. TABLE OF CONTENTS.

The table of contents of this Act is as follows:
Sec. 1. Short title.

Sec. 2. Table of contents.

Sec. 3. References.

Sec. 4. Statement of appropriations.

Sec. 5. Availability of funds.

DIVISION A—DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2012

Title I—Military Personnel

Title II—Operation and Maintenance

Title III—Procurement

Title IV—Research, Development, Test and Evaluation

Title V—Revolving and Management Funds

Title VI—Other Department of Defense Programs

Title VII—Related agencies

Title VIII—General provisions

Title IX—Overseas contingency operations

DIVISION B—ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2012

Title I—Corps of Engineers—Civil

Title II—Department of the Interior

Title III—Department of Energy

Title IV—Independent agencies

Title V—General provisions

DIVISION C—FINANCIAL SERVICES AND GENERAL GOVERNMENT APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2012

Title I—Department of the Treasury

Title II—Executive Office of the President and Funds Appropriated to the President

Title III—The Judiciary

Title IV—District of Columbia

Title V—Independent agencies

Title VI—General provisions—This Act

Title VII—General provisions—Government-wide

Title VIII—General provisions—District of Columbia

DIVISION D—DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2012

Title I—Departmental management and operations

Title II—Security, enforcement, and investigations

Title III—Protection, preparedness, response, and recovery

Title IV—Research and development, training, and services

Title V—General provisions

DIVISION E—DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, ENVIRONMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2012

Title I—Department of the Interior

Title II—Environmental Protection Agency

Title III—Related agencies

Title IV—General provisions

DIVISION F—DEPARTMENTS OF LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, AND EDUCATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2012

Title I—Department of Labor

Title II—Department of Health and Human Services

Title III—Department of Education

Title IV—Related agencies

Title V—General provisions

DIVISION G—LEGISLATIVE BRANCH APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2012

Title I—Legislative branch

Title II—General provisions

DIVISION H—MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND VETERANS AFFAIRS AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2012

Title I—Department of Defense

Title II—Department of Veterans Affairs

Title III—Related agencies

Title IV—Overseas contingency operations

Title V—General provisions

DIVISION I—DEPARTMENT OF STATE, FOREIGN OPERATIONS, AND RELATED PROGRAMS APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2012

Title I—Department of State and related agency