

to work and energize their families and help energize our community.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of us in this House to do the same—work together to identify jobs.

#### BIPARTISAN JOB FAIR IN WASHINGTON STATE

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

Mr. SMITH of Washington. I rise in support of a bipartisan effort to create jobs.

Just as Congressman REICHERT said, he and I are hosting a job fair next week. At a time when unemployment is over 9 percent in this country, when our economy desperately needs to put people back to work, I think this is the way we need to do it, in a bipartisan manner. At the end of the day, we're not going to have any job creation bills that aren't bipartisan because of the nature of Congress.

I applaud Congressman REICHERT for working with me on this idea, and it's really a very good idea in terms of job creation.

Yes, there's huge unemployment, but less well known is there are actually employers out there that have jobs that are trying to find people to fill them. Matching the skills necessary with those jobs is critical. And that's what the HIRE America job fair that we're going to do next week in Kent is all about—bringing in 75 employers that actually have jobs available, with unemployed people looking for work, to match them up, to try to put people to work to get this economy moving again. It's a great idea.

I thank Congressman REICHERT for working with me to do this. It's bipartisan. And it's focused on the number one most important issue this country faces, getting Americans back to work and getting our economy moving.

#### NATIONAL DEBT HITS \$15 TRILLION

(Mr. YODER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. YODER. Mr. Speaker, yesterday was another landmark day in Washington's borrow-and-spend legacy. The national debt now stands at a staggering \$15 trillion. This comes at a time when our economy is struggling, the unemployment rate is high, and Americans are tightening their belts and doing more with less. It remains clear that the Washington theory of borrowing and spending to create wealth and grow jobs simply is a fraud on the American people.

Both political parties know that this staggering debt is a cancer on the future of our Nation and something we can no longer ignore. I ask my colleagues to join together and save the future of this country, to stop the suffocating debt and spending. Let's pass

a constitutional amendment that requires a balanced budget, that prohibits Congress from borrowing from the future, and let's pass a legacy of prosperity and wealth to the next generation.

#### INCOME TAX RETURN IDENTITY THEFT

(Ms. CASTOR of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Mr. Speaker, there is a growing problem across America involving identity theft and tax fraud. This new kind of criminal will steal Social Security numbers and then file for a fraudulent tax return.

The City of Tampa Police Department recently uncovered a multi-million-dollar fraud scheme, lost monies to the taxpayers. So Congressman RICH NUGENT and I, a Republican colleague from Florida, have been working together to tackle this problem.

I intend to file a bill this week that would, one, give local law enforcement the tools it needs to be an effective participant with the IRS in these tax fraud investigations. Right now Federal law doesn't allow local law enforcement to be an active participant. And, two, for folks that have their identities stolen, often months and months and months go by before the IRS is able to fix their return and their credit, and we've got to do that. It's leaving them hanging for months.

So I encourage my colleagues to join in our efforts to tackle tax fraud and this criminal enterprise.

□ 1230

#### LISTEN TO AMERICA'S JOB CREATORS

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, if the Obama administration is serious about helping create jobs for the American people, then it should start by listening to America's job creators. House Republicans understand the importance of freeing our Nation's businessmen and entrepreneurs from the confidence-killing threat of higher taxes and more regulations so that they can invest, grow, and hire again.

This means protecting job creators from needless tax burdens. This means reforming Federal spending. This means supporting a fairer, flatter and simpler Tax Code. This means stopping job-killing regulations that constrain employers from hiring more workers.

On each of these issues, House Republicans have already acted. Following our Plan for America's Job Creators, we've passed more than 20 job-creation bills so far this year.

The path to new jobs has been paved by House Republicans. It's long past time for Senate Democrats and President Obama to follow our lead and enact these jobs bills.

#### GETTING AMERICANS BACK TO WORK

(Ms. SLAUGHTER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, in the past few days, many Americans have contacted me through Facebook and Twitter with their thoughts, and their message was very clear: They want jobs, and they want them now. On behalf of these Americans, I urge the leaders of the House to respond by passing major legislation that will create high-paying jobs.

They write to me: "I hope you mean living-wage jobs that are meaningful, filled with dignity, and generated locally."

"Job creation begins at home. Close the loopholes that send jobs overseas and make it tougher to bring the profits and products back here."

"An additional suggestion would be to fund a Works Program Administration modeled after the first one implemented by Franklin Roosevelt, a new deal for the new millennium."

"We need to stop the manufacturing drain going out of the country, revisit the WPA to jump-start the economy, and fix our aging infrastructure."

"Heck, we need someone to clean weeds out of sidewalks. We need an energy policy and concrete plans to accelerate the use of renewables. Too much of our fuel costs end up in our trade imbalance."

These are the words from my constituents that I'm glad to share with you as we work very hard to get Americans back to work at meaningful jobs.

#### PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2112, CONSOLIDATED AND FURTHER CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2012

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 467 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 467

*Resolved*, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 2112) making appropriations for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2012, and for other purposes. All points of order against the conference report and against its consideration are waived. The conference report shall be considered as read. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the conference report to its adoption without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate; and (2) one motion to recommit if applicable.

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

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER), pending which I yield myself such time as I

may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks.

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

There was no objection.

Ms. FOXX. House Resolution 467 is a closed rule providing for consideration of H.R. 2112, the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, also known as the mini-bus.

Mr. Speaker, this conference report was approved by the conference committee on a wide bipartisan basis with all but one of 38 House and Senate conferees signing off on the report. The bill contains a continuing resolution to avoid a government shutdown and continue Federal operations until December 16, 2011, or until Congress completes the remaining nine FY 2012 appropriations bills. It is important to highlight that this CR is a clean extension and includes no new funding provisions.

In accordance with the Budget Control Act, this conference report upholds the overall discretionary spending level of \$1.043 trillion and includes \$2.3 billion in disaster relief funding, which falls under the disaster designation cap set by the act.

The Agriculture agencies and programs in this bill will receive a total of \$136.6 billion in both discretionary and mandatory funding, a reduction of \$4.6 billion from the President's request based on the administration's midsession review. Discretionary funding in the legislation totals \$19.8 billion, a reduction of \$350 billion below last year's level and a cut of \$2.5 billion from the President's request.

It is important to note that mandatory food and nutrition programs within the Department of Agriculture—including SNAP, also known as food stamps, as well as child nutrition—are funded at \$98.6 billion. This funding will allow all individuals and families who meet the programs' criteria for aid to receive all the benefits available to them, and includes \$3 billion in reserve funds in case of unanticipated increases in participation or food price increases.

Additionally, school lunch and school breakfast programs will receive \$18.2 billion in mandatory funding in the agreement. This funding will help low-income students with free or reduced-price meals at schools in every community in the Nation.

The conference agreement includes provisions to prevent overly burdensome and costly regulations and provide greater flexibility for local school districts to improve the nutritional quality of meals in the national school lunch and school breakfast programs. Without these provisions, the cost of these important programs would bal-

loon by an additional \$7 billion over the next 5 years, leaving States and local school districts in the lurch.

The WIC program is funded at \$6.6 billion. This funding will provide supplemental foods, as well as nutritional and other preventative health services, to low-income participants.

I am pleased to report that the bill places restrictions on the implementation of a Grain Inspection and Packers and Stockyards Administration, GIPSA, proposed rule that would have allowed harmful government interference in the private market for livestock and poultry.

The Commerce, Justice, and Science section of the conference report includes a base total of \$52.7 billion, a decrease of \$583 million below last year's level, and a decrease of almost \$5 billion below the President's request.

The conference agreement includes numerous provisions that protect the Second Amendment right to keep and bear arms. Three of these protections are made permanent law beginning in fiscal year 2012. These three provisions prohibit the Department of Justice from consolidating firearms sales records, electronically retrieving the records of former firearms dealers, and maintaining information on persons who have passed firearms background checks. The conference agreement also contains numerous 1-year firearms protections and new language prohibiting DOJ from requiring imported shotguns to meet a sporting purposes test.

The bill extends important provisions related to Guantanamo Bay, including a prohibition on the transfer or release of any detainee into the U.S. and a prohibition on the acquisition or construction of any new prison to house detainees. Under no circumstances should we endanger our communities by allowing some of the most dangerous people in the world to set foot on American soil.

The conference agreement includes important provisions to protect unborn human life, including a ban on abortion funding for Federal prisoners and a conscience protection for prison employees, and a prohibition on the Legal Services Corporation funds for organizations that engage in abortion-related litigation.

The Transportation, Housing and Urban Development section of the conference report includes a base total of \$55.6 billion, representing a decrease of \$19.4 billion below the President's request.

□ 1240

The conference agreement provides \$500 million for National Infrastructure Investments, commonly referred to as the TIGER program, and includes language prioritizing rail, highway, and transit projects that improve or expand existing systems.

The conference agreement provides \$39.9 billion for the Federal highway program, which is the annual spending level set by the latest Surface Transportation Extension Act.

The agreement provides \$1.66 billion for the Federal Highway Administration's Emergency Relief program, which assists States in rebuilding Federal highways that were damaged by major natural disasters such as Hurricane Irene and the flooding of the Missouri River.

Included in the conference agreement is \$12.5 billion for the FAA. The agreement provides \$3.35 billion for airports and \$2.7 billion for facilities and equipment. Language is included to restore the Block Aircraft Registry Request program, or BARR, and to prohibit future changes to the program. Also included is \$878 million for FAA Next Generation funding to ease congestion and reduce air traffic delays.

The legislation includes a total of \$37.3 billion for the Department of Housing and Urban Development, a decrease of \$3.8 billion below last year's level and \$4.7 billion below the President's request.

The bill does not extend the increased maximum loan limits for Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. These entities have been under public scrutiny for their questionable business practices and use of billions in Federal bailout funds, some of which have been used for extravagant management bonuses. The bill does allow an increase in the conforming loan limits to the Federal Housing Authority, FHA, which is subject to greater congressional scrutiny and oversight.

Mr. Speaker, I am appreciative of the members of the conference committee and cognizant of the tough jobs they had to get to this bipartisan agreement coming to the floor for consideration. It is for this reason that I urge my colleagues to support the rule, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. I thank my colleague for yielding me the customary 30 minutes, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, this is a sad day for the House of Representatives—another demonstration that the House has failed to meet its basic responsibility to the American people. The new budget year began over 6 weeks ago, but not a single routine appropriations bill, not a single one, has been enacted. Instead, we are considering a massive \$100 billion hodgepodge of unrelated programs and agencies all crammed into a single bill that no Member of the House saw before this week.

In fact, most of the provisions in this bill have never been considered by the House at any time in any form. Let me repeat that. A massive \$100 billion bill, most of which has never been considered by the House, brought up for a single, all-or-nothing vote under a completely closed process. And what's worse, we will be back here in a few weeks with another massive omnibus bill to keep the rest of the government open. As I said, Mr. Speaker, this is a sad day for the House.

Fortunately, there is one hint of good news in this mess. The bill does

reject some of the absurd cuts proposed on the other side of the aisle. For example, the bill does not contain proposed cuts that would have denied 700,000 women, infants and children valuable nutritional supplements or defunded the COPS program.

But those welcome steps are not enough to make this a good bill. I am especially disturbed by the unwise and shortsighted cuts to programs important to America's role as a competitive global power. High-speed and intercity passenger rail, for example, gets no funding under this agreement. The bill allows the country to maintain Amtrak at its current state, but does nothing to help us keep pace with countries like China and Germany, who have already built a rail infrastructure that will expand their economies well into the 21st century. If our country hopes to remain a global superpower in the 21st century, we have to do more to invest in our country than the meager steps that we are taking today.

Especially in tough economic times like these, we need to rebuild our infrastructure, to be educating our children, and creating jobs for the millions of unemployed. Instead of the Band-Aid measure we are considering today, we have to truly begin to invest in our future and ensure that we not only survive, but that we thrive, in the century to come.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I just want to say to my colleague from New York that I think the American people are beginning to realize that government spends money; it doesn't invest money.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts, a member of the Committee on Rules, Mr. MCGOVERN.

Mr. MCGOVERN. I thank my ranking member for yielding to me.

Mr. Speaker, there are some good things in this minibus. I'm especially pleased with the funding levels for the SNAP and the WIC programs, which will ensure that hungry people have access to nutritious food during these tough economic times. And I regret very much that those programs were under attack by the Republican majority in this House, but in this minibus, those levels are adequate. And I'll likely support the final passage of this bill.

But, Mr. Speaker, for the life of me, I can't understand why policy riders were allowed to be included in the final bill. Some were even airdropped in the dark of night without being considered by either the House or the Senate. Most troubling, the underlying bill includes a special carve-out for Maine and Vermont to allow 100,000-pound trucks on their interstate highways for the next 20 years.

Mr. Speaker, current law allows only trucks up to 80,000 pounds to travel on interstates—and for good reason. Bigger, heavier trucks are an enormous

safety threat. Oversized rigs are more likely to be involved in crashes, not to mention that it's unnerving to see one in your rearview mirror bearing down on you on the highway. And if the safety risks are not convincing enough as to why heavier trucks are a bad idea, consider the economic arguments. We're here talking about deficit reduction, and already bigger trucks don't pay their fair share for the damage they incur on our roads and our bridges. An 80,000-pound truck only pays 80 percent of its damage costs, and a 97,000-pound truck would pay only half of the damage it causes.

Our Nation's infrastructure is crumbling, and the highway trust fund is woefully underfunded. Where are we going to get this money to repair our infrastructure? And the Maine and the Vermont exemptions will only make this problem worse.

And it also starts us down a slippery slope of allowing other States to ask for special weight-limit exemptions. We'll end up with a patchwork of truck-size and truck-weight laws that will make the business of transporting goods by truck across State lines a confusing mess.

Mr. Speaker, there were no hearings—none, zero—no hearings held in the House on the Maine and Vermont exemption. The House didn't even consider a Transportation Appropriations bill. So to be making such a major policy change without thoughtful consideration and vigorous debate is absurd.

I would remind my colleagues that there's bipartisan opposition to increasing truck size and truck weight. I have a bill to freeze truck size and truck weight at 80,000 pounds across the entire national highway system, and it has 60 bipartisan cosponsors. The issue of increasing truck size and weight needs to be fully understood and debated before making any long-term policy changes. I strongly oppose the Maine and Vermont policy rider in this appropriations bill; and I regret very, very much that this was included without the appropriate hearings, without the appropriate oversight, and without doing it out in the open so people could understand what the policy implications are by making this exemption.

Ms. FOXX. I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado, a member of the Committee on Rules, Mr. POLIS.

Mr. POLIS. I thank the gentlelady from New York.

Mr. Speaker, I have to voice my opposition to an insidious provision that has been added to this bill at the last minute by agribusiness and the frozen food industry, and that is a change that allows pizza to be counted as a vegetable. They started with French fries; now they've moved on to pizza. This language equates pizza with vegetables and weakens otherwise good school nutrition standards.

This false equivalency harkens back to the ludicrous labeling of ketchup as a vegetable made infamous 30 years ago by President Ronald Reagan. Again, this bill's actual language requires crediting of tomato paste—again, crediting of tomato paste from page 90 of this bill—as a vegetable under the school lunch program to be subsidized by taxpayers as a vegetable.

□ 1250

I had a family from my district, from Eagle County, Colorado, in my office earlier this morning and I asked the mom, I said, When your kid is eating, do you count pizza as his vegetable? And she said, No. And parents across the Nation agree.

Pizza can be incorporated into a healthy diet. I eat pizza. Most of my constituents eat pizza. But when we're talking about taxpayer subsidies for healthy vegetables, to make sure that they're available for kids on the side of pizza, making sure there's some broccoli, making sure there's some spinach, making sure there's something healthy for them to eat at the school lunch counter, pizza alone—particularly pizza with no vegetables on it, just tomato paste—it's common sense that it's not a vegetable. What's next? Are Twinkies going to be considered a vegetable?

Rather than having a deliberative effort, we have special interests inserting these provisions into these bills, contrary to the public health. And we wonder why Congress is so unpopular nationally. No one can help but to look at us and scratch their heads when we say that french fries count as a healthy, nutritious vegetable, that pizza counts as a healthy, nutritional element.

You know, poor children's health is something we all have a stake in. Not only are the kids and the families affected, but we're all affected. The costs of Medicaid and Medicare, government spending, rising obesity rates. The empty calories in french fries are not equal to truly nutritious vegetables like carrots, spinach, lettuce, broccoli, cucumbers.

I know it's hard to get kids to eat vegetables. I have a 9-week-old. He hasn't been weaned yet, so we haven't had to deal with that yet. But you know what? You don't define vegetables down. You don't call a Twinkie a vegetable. You don't call pizza a vegetable. What you do is you have to make sure that kids know how to incorporate healthy food into their diet so they can grow up strong and keep all of our costs down and make sure to keep America healthy.

Mr. Speaker, this bill has many important provisions, but I feel it's critical to highlight the ludicrous definition that Congress is giving by redefining nutrition down and providing taxpayer subsidies for unhealthy food in our schools.

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

Our colleagues across the aisle often try to distract from what are the real

issues facing our country and get into the weeds, and bills like this give them a perfect opportunity to do that. But when I'm home every weekend and talk to my constituents, what they're concerned about is they have incredible outrage with the inaction of the liberal Democrat-controlled Senate.

My constituents are aware of the many bills that the House has passed but which are stalled in the Senate, and many of these bills deal directly with promoting jobs, which remains the prevailing issue of so many Americans.

Our colleagues are upset about the quality of the free lunches that we provide. Well, we have more people in poverty and getting free lunches because the Democrat-controlled Senate refuses to work with the Republicans in the House to set an environment where more jobs can be created and fewer people would be dependent on food stamps and be dependent on getting free breakfast and free lunches in the schools.

My constituents understand the colossal failure of the Obama stimulus bill and the general policies that existed when the Democrats were in control of the House for 4 years. My constituents understand that government can create jobs only for more government bureaucrats. And those bureaucrats must justify their existence by creating more regulations that wind up killing more private sector jobs.

The liberal Democrat elites in Washington keep asking for one Republican jobs bill. Well, Mr. Speaker, we've passed at least 20 jobs bills that help the private sector—the only sector of our economy that can actually create real jobs through growth in their businesses.

The liberals keep buying into the false theory that government will create millions of jobs. The reality is that, unless we provide the private sector with an environment that is conducive to job creation, jobs will be very hard to come by.

Mr. Speaker, Republicans have been listening to our constituents, and we're acting to provide private business owners and entrepreneurs with the tools that they need to create jobs. However, the bills we pass and send over to the Senate just sit there and nothing is done with them.

Mr. Speaker, we could reduce the number of children, again, on free and reduced lunches by creating jobs and getting people out of poverty in this country. That's what we should be focused on right now. We could solve a lot of the problems in this country by doing that.

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

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Ohio, a member of the Committee on Appropriations, Ms. KAPTUR.

Ms. KAPTUR. I thank the ranking member, Congresswoman SLAUGHTER, for her incredible work and rise today,

Mr. Speaker, to support the rule for fiscal year 2012 appropriations for agriculture, transportation, training and justice. Technically—or maybe untechnically—this bill is called the “mini-bus.” I completely commend the conferees for including language based on legislation we introduced directing additional resources for the Federal Bureau of Investigation's White-Collar Crime Division for Wall Street financial crime prosecution.

Moreover, with the Federal deficit requiring our rigor, this mini bill makes difficult cuts, but also provides support for those most hurt by the current recession. Let me state for the record that the trillions of dollars of deficit being racked up in this country come from some pretty clear sources: first of all, two wars—the longest wars in American history, lasting over a decade now; also, the cost of unemployment to this economy caused by Wall Street malfeasance; and, finally, looking back, the tax cuts for the rich enacted during the last Bush administration that continue to rack up mounting deficits every year. It's very clear what's happening to cause the deficits. And then with the rising deficit, the cost of added interest is included in the debt total.

This bill meets the spending caps set in the Budget Control Act compromise and includes a clean continuing resolution to prevent a government shutdown, which would only further hurt our economy.

With over 15 percent of Americans living in poverty now, our moral responsibility as a Congress must be to help our fellow citizens weather this storm—which they didn't create. Thus this bill maintains funding for key programs, such as for food for needy children and poor women who are pregnant, for food commodities for food banks across this country that are strapped with rising need, and for food sustenance for the unemployed.

In particular, this bill includes language, based on legislation I authored, to allow the FBI to hire hundreds of new agents to fully investigate white-collar crime in the financial services sector. People across Ohio, from Toledo to Cleveland, are hurting because of the recklessness of Wall Street. Those who broke the law in order to get rich at the expense of everybody else should be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. I commend the conferees for including my language to help provide the FBI with the necessary resources to investigate those who are responsible.

I urge my colleagues to support the rule and the underlying bill, which is quite balanced despite the very difficult choices that they had to make.

Ms. FOXX. I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. I thank the gentlewoman from New York for her

kindness in yielding. I thank the hard work of the Appropriations Committee. I thank the gentlewoman from Virginia for managing. And I thank Mr. DICKS as well for accepting the challenge in these very difficult times.

It's not a happy time to come to the floor and indicate that this is what we have to do, but it's important to acknowledge some challenges that we still have. And those challenges are: the many food programs that have to be capped in spite of the numbers of people who are hungry in this country; the dumbing down of food resources, in particular, as my colleague from Colorado mentioned, listing tomato paste and french fries as vegetables; and then an issue that I hope that I will be able to continue to work on with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and that is food deserts, where there are pockets in rural and urban centers where we have no food access, good healthy food, vegetables.

But I am glad that the New Starts, under the transportation bill, includes the north and southeast lines for the city of Houston, creating jobs, putting people to work, and improving mobility, some \$94,616,000.

□ 1300

I am also delighted that TIGER grants are in at \$500 million, but disappointed in the community planning, that we have lost some \$830 million for community block grants, \$1.6 billion below the President. That's where we help rebuild communities and jobs.

The Legal Services Corporation that I've been a supporter of and actively was on our local board, board of directors, now has been reduced by \$348 million; but it has been reduced, which creates what we call the justice gap.

I also am concerned about providing more developmental training for our law enforcement that covers our Federal sectors. In particular, I am concerned about the police in the Supreme Court and the Chief of Police there, and the concern for the lack of professionalism and the need for training.

I believe that in the Capitol Police scenario, there is an orderly process of the Chief, the Sergeant-at-Arms, and we work wonderfully together with these outstanding men and women. It's a shame for those who have to protect the other body of government, the Supreme Court, to have individuals who do not recognize IDs, are not professional in their handling of their business. And I will be raising this issue with the Department of Justice and relating it to the funding which I think is necessary to either provide them with more funding or to put more stringent guidelines in their hiring policies and the way they train people.

So I rise today to say that I am glad that we will have the government open, and that we have funded agriculture programs, not at the best; we've funded infrastructure. But we can do more. And I believe we should not adhere to any cuts going forward, and I hope the

supercommittee will not do that. I ask for support of the underlying bill.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I would advise my colleague from New York that I have no requests for time. I do have some more comments that I will make that I am reserving until a little bit later in the time.

I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. I am prepared to close.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New York.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, although I'm encouraged that we were able to reverse some of the most severe cuts proposed, I am disappointed that our budget process has come to this, \$100 billion packed with provisions that the House has never considered. Therefore, on process, I urge a "no" vote on the rule.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, the rule before us today allows us to proceed to the general debate of a bill that encompasses three major appropriation measures. I want to thank the conferees for their work on this agreement.

As we move forward with the debate, we must keep in mind the dire fiscal situation that our country is in, and we must continue to work in a fiscally responsible manner.

With that, I urge my colleagues to vote for this rule. I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the resolution.

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

Ms. SLAUGHTER. 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 CONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS TO SUSPEND THE RULES

Mr. NUGENT. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 466 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 466

*Resolved*, That it shall be in order at any time through the legislative day of November 18, 2011, for the Speaker to entertain motions that the House suspend the rules, as though under clause 1 of rule XV, relating to the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 2) proposing a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution of the United States. Debate on such a motion shall be extended to five hours.

SEC. 2. The Chair may postpone further consideration of a motion considered pursuant to this resolution to such time as may be designated by the Speaker.

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

Mr. NUGENT. Mr. Speaker, for purposes of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS) pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time is yielded for the purpose of debate only.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. NUGENT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. NUGENT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of this rule, House Resolution 466. The rule provides for consideration of what may be the very single most significant piece of legislation that I've had the opportunity to vote on since coming to this body over 10 months ago.

This rule is what allows the House of Representatives to move forward and vote on H.J. Res. 2, a balanced budget amendment to the United States Constitution.

My resolution that we're considering here today suspends the rules and allows the House to vote on H.J. Res. 2. I'm sure that some of my colleagues may be concerned we're moving to consider the balanced budget amendment under suspension of the rules for fear it would somehow limit debate.

I agree with them. Amending the United States Constitution is not to be taken lightly. This is why the rule provides for 5 hours of debate on this vital issue, because, you see, Mr. Speaker, what we're doing here today is something that should be discussed, something that must be discussed.

We're fundamentally challenging the way Washington works. And you know what? It's about time. It's about time we had real conversation about how our Nation spends its money. It's about time that we made the Federal Government budget the way I did when I was a sheriff of a county in Florida.

It's about time that we balance the Federal checkbook the way American families do every day. It's about time. That's what I think and, more importantly, that's what the majority of the American people think.

The mere fact that we're here today is a failure of leadership. For decades, Washington politicians have kicked the can down the road, choosing deficit spending over fiscal responsibility, choosing frivolous pork projects, wasteful programs, and easy answers over making tough decisions and cutting back. Republicans did it when they were in power, and Democrats did it when they were in power too. Nobody is blameless in getting us to where we are today.

But the days of finger-pointing are over. We don't have the luxury of time to look back and play the blame game. We need to move forward and find a solution to get us out of the hole that

we're already in. A balanced budget amendment is a vital part of doing just that.

Yesterday, the United States surpassed \$15 trillion in debt. Let me say that again: we're now \$15 trillion in debt. While recognizing this sad landmark, I can't help but think about the fact that this didn't have to be the way it is.

In 1997, the House of Representatives passed a balanced budget amendment. Unfortunately, the Senate failed to pass this amendment by one vote. One vote, Mr. Speaker, one vote that would separate us from a road towards fiscal responsibility to where we are today. So here we go again, 14 years later, having the same debate.

I can't stand here today without thinking about my three sons. With a debt of \$15 trillion, each of my boys owes over \$48,000 in national debt. It means the children and grandchildren of each and every person in this room owes \$48,000 to the Federal Government, \$48,000 that they didn't spend, that they didn't ask for, and that they now are saddled with by a government of excesses.

Only one Senator stood between where we are now and \$15 trillion in debt and where we could have been. So today I stand up in support of this rule and support H.J. Res. 2. I stand up for my kids, my future grandkids, and for all Americans who are saddled with that \$48,000 in debt from the day that they're born.

□ 1310

I stand up for giving Congress a second chance, a chance to get it right this time. Unfortunately, I understand the Democratic leadership is whipping against this.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know how else to say this. This simply baffles me. Thanks to the whipping efforts of the Democratic leadership, there are Members in the House who voted for the balanced budget amendment in 1997 who now say they're going to oppose it. In fact, two members of the Democrats' three-person leadership team voted for the 1997 amendment.

I've only been here in D.C., like I said, for a little over 10 months, but of all of the inexplicable things I've seen since coming to Congress, this just stumps me more than just about anything else I've seen here. What could these Members have been seeing between 1997 and today that makes them say, Yeah, you know what? Spending is right on target. Let's just stick with the status quo. It's dumbfounding.

It's often said the definition of insanity is to do the same thing over and over and over again and expect a different outcome. I don't understand how anybody can argue that we can continue to spend the way we do and expect to free ourselves from this monstrous, burdensome debt. We need to break the cycle. We've got to hold Congress' feet to the fire now and into the future. A balanced budget amendment