

□ 1613

So the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ONLINE CONSENT FOR SHARING VIDEO SERVICE USE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2471) to amend section 2710 of title 18, United States Code, to clarify that a videotape service provider may obtain a consumer's informed, written consent on an ongoing basis and that consent may be obtained through the Internet, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended.

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 303, nays 116, not voting 14, as follows:

[Roll No. 891]

YEAS—303

Adams	Connolly (VA)	Green, Gene
Aderholt	Conyers	Griffin (AR)
Altmire	Cooper	Griffith (VA)
Amash	Costa	Grimm
Amodel	Courtney	Guinta
Andrews	Cravaack	Guthrie
Austria	Crawford	Hall
Bachus	Crenshaw	Hanna
Barletta	Critz	Harper
Barrow	Cuellar	Harris
Bartlett	Davis (CA)	Hartzler
Bass (NH)	Davis (KY)	Hastings (WA)
Benishek	Denham	Hayworth
Berg	Dent	Heck
Berkley	DesJarlais	Heinrich
Berman	Deutch	Hensarling
Biggert	Diaz-Balart	Herger
Bilbray	Doggett	Higgins
Bilirakis	Dold	Hochul
Bishop (UT)	Donnelly (IN)	Holden
Black	Doyle	Honda
Blackburn	Dreier	Hoyer
Blumenauer	Duffy	Huelskamp
Bonner	Duncan (SC)	Huizenga (MI)
Bono Mack	Duncan (TN)	Hultgren
Boren	Ellmers	Hunter
Boswell	Emerson	Hurt
Boustany	Eshoo	Israel
Brady (PA)	Farr	Issa
Brady (TX)	Filner	Jenkins
Braley (IA)	Fincher	Johnson (OH)
Brooks	Fitzpatrick	Johnson, Sam
Broun (GA)	Flake	Jordan
Buchanan	Fleischmann	Kelly
Bucshon	Fleming	King (IA)
Buerkle	Flores	King (NY)
Burgess	Forbes	Kingston
Burton (IN)	Fortenberry	Kinzinger (IL)
Calvert	Fox	Kline
Camp	Franks (AZ)	Labrador
Cambell	Frelinghuysen	Lamborn
Canseco	Galleghy	Lance
Cantor	Gardner	Landry
Capito	Garrett	Langevin
Capps	Gerlach	Lankford
Carney	Gibbs	Larsen (WA)
Carter	Gibson	Latham
Cassidy	Gingrey (GA)	LaTourette
Chabot	Gonzalez	Latta
Chaffetz	Goodlatte	Lewis (CA)
Chu	Gosar	Lipinski
Coble	Gowdy	LoBiondo
Coffman (CO)	Granger	Lofgren, Zoe
Cole	Graves (GA)	Long
Conaway	Graves (MO)	Lucas

Luetkemeyer	Pence	Schwartz
Lujan	Perlmutter	Schweikert
Lummis	Peters	Scott (SC)
Lungren, Daniel E.	Petri	Scott, Austin
Lynch	Pitts	Sensenbrenner
Mack	Platts	Sessions
Manzullo	Poe (TX)	Shimkus
Marchant	Polis	Shuler
Matheson	Pompeo	Shuster
Matsui	Posey	Simpson
McCarthy (CA)	Price (GA)	Sires
McCarthy (NY)	Quayle	Smith (NE)
McCaul	Quigley	Smith (NJ)
McClintock	Rahall	Smith (TX)
McCollum	Reed	Smith (WA)
McCotter	Rehberg	Southerland
McHenry	Reichert	Stivers
McIntyre	Renacci	Stutzman
McKeon	Ribble	Sullivan
McKinley	Rigell	Terry
McMorris	Rivera	Thompson (CA)
Rodgers	Roby	Thompson (PA)
McNerney	Roe (TN)	Thornberry
Meehan	Rogers (AL)	Tiberi
Mica	Rogers (KY)	Tipton
Michaud	Rogers (MI)	Tonko
Miller (FL)	Rohrabacher	Turner (NY)
Miller (MI)	Rokita	Turner (OH)
Miller, Gary	Rooney	Upton
Mulvaney	Ros-Lehtinen	Walberg
Murphy (CT)	Roskam	Walden
Murphy (PA)	Ross (AR)	Walsh (IL)
Neugebauer	Ross (FL)	Walz (MN)
Noem	Rothman (NJ)	Waters
Nugent	Royce	Waxman
Nunes	Runyan	Webster
Nunnelee	Ruppersberger	West
Olson	Ryan (WI)	Westmoreland
Owens	Sánchez, Linda T.	Whitfield
Palazzo	Sanchez, Loretta	Wilson (SC)
Pallone	Sarbanes	Wittman
Pascarella	Scalise	Wolf
Paul	Schilling	Womack
Paulsen	Schmidt	Woodall
Pearce	Schock	Yoder
Pelosi	Schrader	Young (AK)
		Young (IN)

NAYS—116

Ackerman	Gutierrez	Pastor (AZ)
Baca	Hahn	Payne
Baldwin	Hanabusa	Peterson
Barton (TX)	Hastings (FL)	Pingree (ME)
Bass (CA)	Herrera Beutler	Price (NC)
Becerra	Hinojosa	Rangel
Bishop (GA)	Hirono	Reyes
Bishop (NY)	Holt	Richardson
Brown (FL)	Jackson (IL)	Richmond
Butterfield	Jackson Lee	Roybal-Allard
Capuano	(TX)	Rush
Carnahan	Johnson (GA)	Ryan (OH)
Carson (IN)	Johnson (IL)	Schakowsky
Chandler	Johnson, E. B.	Schiff
Cicilline	Jones	Scott (VA)
Clarke (MI)	Kaptur	Scott, David
Clarke (NY)	Keating	Serrano
Clay	Kildee	Sewell
Cleaver	Kind	Sherman
Clyburn	Kissell	Slaughter
Cohen	Kucinich	Speier
Costello	Larson (CT)	Stark
Crowley	Lee (CA)	Stearns
Culberson	Levin	Sutton
Cummings	Lewis (GA)	Thompson (MS)
Davis (IL)	Loebback	Tierney
DeFazio	Lowey	Towns
DeGette	Maloney	Tsongas
DeLauro	Markey	Van Hollen
Dingell	McDermott	Velázquez
Edwards	McGovern	Visclosky
Ellison	Meeks	Wasserman
Engel	Miller (NC)	Schultz
Farenthold	Miller, George	Watt
Fattah	Moore	Welch
Frank (MA)	Moran	Wilson (FL)
Fudge	Napolitano	Woolsey
Garamendi	Neal	Yarmuth
Green, Al	Oliver	
Grijalva		

NOT VOTING—14

Akin	Dicks	Marino
Alexander	Giffords	Myrick
Bachmann	Gohmert	Nadler
Cardoza	Hinchey	Young (FL)
Castor (FL)	Inslee	

□ 1621

Mr. RUSH changed his vote from “yea” to “nay.”

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

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. AKIN. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 889, 890 and 891, I was delayed and unable to vote. Had I been present I would have voted “yea” on all three.

□ 1620

GIVING CONGRESSIONAL CONSENT TO MISSOURI AND ILLINOIS BI-STATE DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the joint resolution (S.J. Res. 22) to grant the consent of Congress to an amendment to the compact between the States of Missouri and Illinois providing that bonds issued by the Bi-State Development Agency may mature in not to exceed 40 years, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the joint resolution.

The text of the joint resolution is as follows:

S.J. RES. 22

Whereas to grant the consent of Congress to an amendment to the compact between the States of Missouri and Illinois providing that bonds issued by the Bi-State Development Agency may mature in not to exceed 40 years;

Whereas the Congress in consenting to the compact between Missouri and Illinois creating the Bi-State Development Agency and the Bi-State Metropolitan District provided that no power shall be exercised by the Bi-State Agency until such power has been conferred upon the Bi-State Agency by the legislatures of the States to the compact and approved by an Act of Congress;

Whereas such States previously enacted legislation providing that the Bi-State Agency had the power to issue notes, bonds, or other instruments in writing provided they shall mature in not to exceed 30 years, and Congress consented to such power; and

Whereas such States have now enacted legislation amending this power: Now therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. CONSENT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The consent of Congress is given to the amendment of the powers conferred on the Bi-State Development Agency by Senate Bill 758, Laws of Missouri 2010 and Public Act 96-1520 (Senate Bill 3342), Laws of Illinois 2010.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment to the powers conferred by the Acts consented to in subsection (a) shall take effect on December 17, 2010.

SEC. 2. APPLICATION OF ACT OF AUGUST 31, 1950.

The provisions of the Act of August 31, 1950 (64 Stat. 568) shall apply to the amendment approved under this joint resolution to the same extent as if such amendment was conferred under the provisions of the compact consented to in such Act.

SEC. 3. RIGHT TO ALTER, AMEND, OR REPEAL.

The right to alter, amend, or repeal this joint resolution is expressly reserved.

SEC. 4. RESERVATION OF RIGHTS.

The right is reserved to Congress to require the disclosure and furnishings of such information or data by the Bi-State Development Agency as is deemed appropriate by Congress.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Amendment:

Strike out all after the resolving clause and insert:

SECTION 1. CONSENT.

(a) *IN GENERAL.*—The consent of Congress is given to the amendment of the powers conferred on the Bi-State Development Agency by Senate Bill 758, Laws of Missouri 2010 and Public Act 96–1520 (Senate Bill 3342), Laws of Illinois 2010.

(b) *EFFECTIVE DATE.*—The amendment to the powers conferred by the Acts consented to in subsection (a) shall take effect on the date of enactment of this Act.

SEC. 2. APPLICATION OF ACT OF AUGUST 31, 1950.

The provisions of the Act of August 31, 1950 (64 Stat. 568) shall apply to the amendment approved under this joint resolution to the same extent as if such amendment was conferred under the provisions of the compact consented to in such Act.

SEC. 3. RIGHT TO ALTER, AMEND, OR REPEAL.

The right to alter, amend, or repeal this joint resolution is expressly reserved.

SEC. 4. RESERVATION OF RIGHTS.

The right is reserved to Congress to require the disclosure and furnishings of such information or data by the Bi-State Development Agency as is deemed appropriate by Congress.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on S.J. Res. 22, as amended, currently under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

The Founding Fathers did not believe that the Federal Government should try to solve every problem in the country. Instead, they believed that local problems should have local solutions. This system of federalism became the bedrock of the Constitution.

One particular aspect of our federalist system is found in the Compact Clause of the Constitution. The clause recognizes agreements or contracts that States make among themselves, with congressional approval when necessary. Today, there are approximately 200 active interstate compacts addressing a variety of issues that range from environmental and energy policy to natural resources to traffic and transportation. Rather than wait for a one-size-fits-all program from Washington, D.C., the Constitution allows States to solve these kinds of problems for themselves.

In 1949, Missouri and Illinois formed a compact to create the Bi-State Development Agency. The agency's mission is to facilitate and coordinate economic and infrastructure development in the St. Louis metropolitan area. Among other projects, the agency runs the public transportation system in St. Louis. The agency does not have taxing authority, but it may issue bonds. For example, in the 1960s, the agency sold bonds to finance construction of the tram to the top of the Gateway Arch, which it operates today. The compact allows the agency to sell 30-year bonds. Last year, most States adopted legislation to amend the compact and allow the agency to issue 40-year bonds.

In addition to other capital improvements, the agency could use revenue from these 40-year bonds to support the CityArchRiver 2015 initiative. The purpose of the CityArchRiver 2015 is to better connect downtown St. Louis with the Gateway Arch and the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial national park. The project also involves building elevated walkways across the river to Illinois.

Senate Joint Resolution 22 gives congressional approval to this amendment, the Missouri-Illinois Interstate Compact. The Judiciary Committee marked up its companion, House Joint Resolution 70, on September 21. The suspension version of Senate Joint Resolution 22 contains one amendment, to correct a minor drafting error regarding the effective date. With this amendment, Senate Joint Resolution 22 will be effective upon the date of enactment.

In conclusion, I'm pleased to see this feature of our federalist system at work. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this resolution and look forward to its swift passage.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Members of the House, under the Constitution, article I, section 10, clause 3, these kinds of interstate compacts must be ratified by the House of Representatives. Senate Joint Resolution 22 gives congressional approval to an agreement between Missouri and Illinois to amend the interstate compact establishing the Bi-State Development Agency.

My colleague on the Judiciary, Judge Gohmert, has expertly described what it is that brings us here, but I would merely add that the congressionally approved interstate compact establishing the Bi-State Development Agency in 1950 serves as the primary provider of the public transportation for the St. Louis metropolitan area. It also develops, maintains, owns, and operates bridges, airports, wharves, docks, grain elevators, industrial parks, parking facilities, refuse and waste handling facilities, as well as fuel, energy, air, water, rail, or commodity storage areas. Also, there is a 40-year maximum maturity period for

bonds and other financial instruments which will allow the agency to finance projects for longer periods of time.

I congratulate my colleague from St. Louis, WILLIAM LACY CLAY, a distinguished Member from Missouri whose father was in on the first interstate compact, and now we're proud that he and other of his colleagues from both Missouri and Illinois are supporting this Senate Joint Resolution 22. I urge its favorable consideration.

I would like to yield the distinguished gentleman as much time as he may consume.

□ 1630

Mr. CLAY. Madam Speaker, I want to thank the chairman and ranking member of the full committee and the chairman and ranking member of the subcommittee for their leadership and for moving this critical resolution.

I'm proud to have introduced the House version of this joint resolution, and it accomplishes two very good things: S.J. Res. 22 approves an important amendment to a compact between two States.

As was mentioned before, in 1949, Missouri and Illinois entered into an agreement to foster "regional economic development through excellence in transportation." The compact created the Bi-State Development Agency. Congress approved it, and has approved several amendments over the last 6 decades.

The agency, now known as "Metro," operates the St. Louis Metropolitan region's public transportation system. It has more than 2,400 employees and carries over 55 million passengers each year.

This resolution approves a small but crucial change to the Bi-State Compact. Both State legislatures have passed it, and both Governors have signed it. This is a necessary and good amendment, and there is no negative impact to the Nation or to States. As such, Congress should approve it.

This resolution also enables the Congress to fulfill one of its constitutional duties. And I agree with my good friend, Mr. GOHMERT, that Congress should not overstep its authority. While we do not always agree on the limits of that power, we agree on this resolution and on the constitutional authority for it.

Article I, section 10, clause 3 of the Constitution says that "No State shall, without the consent of Congress . . . enter into an agreement or compact with another State."

The Framers of the Constitution required that Congress would have to approve these agreements to protect the interests and rights of the other States. This also protects the rights of the citizens within the States that are party to the compact by providing Federal oversight.

This clause was a compromise. There were those who wanted to give the Federal Government greater power over the States, including the authority to

regulate to negate State laws. Others felt very strongly that this would be overly nationalist and broad.

The Constitutional Convention, rather than giving the Federal Government complete control over everything, or nothing, compromised. They compromised for the good of the Nation. They granted the Federal Government blanket authority over some areas. They also limited the Federal Government's authority in others. And they required congressional approval for agreements between the States.

This compromise, one of many that formed our great country, demonstrates that two opposing sides, who each feel passionately about their point of view, can come together and compromise for the good of the Nation. They each put aside their well-intentioned and strongly held belief that they were completely correct, and that the other side was completely wrong, and found a way to work out the differences. Each gave up something they held dear in order to achieve a higher good: That was the creation of a strong Nation, a Nation that would endure.

Madam Speaker, there is a lesson here, a 224-year old lesson for us who serve in Congress today.

Once again, I thank the chairman and ranking member.

Mr. GOHMERT. I have no requests for time, and I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield as much time as she may consume to the distinguished gentlelady from Houston, Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE), a senior member of the committee.

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I want to applaud the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT), the ranking member, and my colleague from Missouri, and to echo the comments of Mr. CONYERS on his father, but also the stellar work that he is doing. As a member of the delegation, we can always count on Missouri to test the Constitution and to ask the United States to do what is right.

I am rising to support this compact. Frankly, I want to really embrace it because it is maybe one aspect of legislation, Madam Speaker, that we are actually bipartisan and supporting it without hesitation.

I, frankly, believe that the Federal Government should not overreach as it relates to compacts that have been between States. But I do think that regulation is key and crucial to give States extra leverage.

So let me congratulate Mr. CLAY. And I look forward to supporting this legislation.

I will add, as well, that when I think of bonds, I think of opportunities for building, using resources to restore. And by the very nature of that, Madam Speaker, we're talking about creating jobs.

So I add another applause to this particular legislation coming out of the Judiciary Committee because, for once,

among many bills that we have been debating from the Judiciary Committee, this bill might enhance opportunities for jobs. I think of bonds. I think of jobs. I think of utilization of funds from bonds as they mature. And this is a good thing.

I'm sad to say that in the course of the time that we've spent, maybe over the last 3 weeks, when we could have actually engaged in reasonable debate on how we raise the payroll tax, how do we extend the payroll tax cut, and how do we extend the unemployment benefits, we have not been able to do that.

So let me just share my assessment of the folk who are needing unemployment benefits. Personal savings have gone. Family savings have gone. They've exhausted the 401(k)s and they have tapped every other fungible amount of dollars that they might have, maybe even to the kiddie's saving account that started with 25 cents, leaving many individuals in this harmonious, humble holiday time, desperate, desperate for a job, desperate for assistance, desperate for being able to pay their mortgage, desperate for paying their rent.

Madam Speaker, maybe we should also say, desperate in getting one more allotment of food stamps. Maybe we're not aware that there are 46 million families on food stamps, and most of them wait all the way to the exhaustion of those food stamps; find themselves, before the next opportunity for food stamps, literally drinking water, making tea, and eating crackers. There was an expose on this just recently on one of our cable stations, families waiting until 12 midnight to watch and see if their account has in it the amount of money they needed to enter a grocery store to feed their children.

I don't believe that we can leave this sacred and august institution without, one, providing relief on extending the payroll tax cut, giving \$1,000 and \$1,500 to the American working class. And clearly, I don't believe that we can leave without providing for unemployment. Every dollar invested in unemployment insurance yields \$1.52 in economic growth, and at least 200,000 jobs will be lost if Republicans block extension of the unemployment insurance.

In fact, frankly, I know that Scrooge would not find a place of comfort in this House.

□ 1640

We have always risen to the occasion of helping the most desperate. Whether it has been under Franklin Delano Roosevelt in World War II, where he had to put the apple sellers back to work, or whether it was when our President had to stop the bleeding with the \$800 billion stimulus, we have always risen to be able to find a way to move our economy. And if we would tell the truth, we would see that our economy is percolating along.

So in the tribute of President Obama, who speaks today in Kansas in the same place that President Teddy Roo-

sevelt spoke about opportunity for Americans, I'm asking for the Members of Congress to come to the floor and give opportunity for Americans.

I will close by saying to my friends, there are many good friends who are running for President. Many of us have worked with them. And anytime an American wants to offer themselves to serve this country, I have no angst with them, no matter how much I disagree with their policy. But let me be very clear, as a child that grew up poor, lived with neighbors who were poor—not in our minds, but certainly by our economics—I want to make the record very clear: poor children have role models because poor families get up every day and go to work. And the solution to poor children being the best that they can be is not a Donald Trump apprenticeship, and it sure isn't to get rid of the working janitors who are supporting their families and put the poor children to work.

I hope that we can do better than that, Madam Speaker, and get back to work and make sure we extend the payroll tax for working families. And let's extend the unemployment insurance for the 99ers.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I yield as much time as he may consume to the distinguished gentleman from New York (Mr. TONKO).

Mr. TONKO. I thank the Representative from Michigan for the opportunity to speak to this measure and to really express concern about the inordinate time that we are spending on measures that allow us to harm the air that we breathe and the water that we drink.

The American people are asking us to set priorities here that focus on job creation. They're demanding that this body focus on jobs and helping rebuild our economy. Instead, we seek to be spending hours debating regulatory and bureaucratic measures that are flawed and would dramatically undermine the ability of our government to protect the air that we breathe and the water that we drink. Instead, I would suggest that our time be better spent focusing on putting more money in the pockets of American workers, empowering our middle class.

Mr. GOHMERT. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. TONKO. I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. GOHMERT. I thank the gentleman.

If our time would be better spent on those things, we would be glad to withdraw the suspension on your suggestion and just drop it right now. We will be glad to do that. I will make that offer.

Mr. TONKO. Madam Speaker, might I suggest that during this holiday season, as the American public struggles to pay bills that range from gas bills to groceries that are required for their mortgages, again, the focus should be on job creation. And the payroll tax holiday is nearing its expiration. This body should act to extend that tax cut for hardworking middle class American

families. A failure to do so would result in job losses, a reduction in economic activity, and higher taxes for many families when they can least afford it.

So my suggestion here is to stop wasting time on less important priorities and start focusing on creating jobs and standing up for our middle class, enabling them to strengthen their purchasing power and to enable our economic recovery to be as vital and strong as possible.

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

Mr. GOHMERT. As a closing comment, I have come to know the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CLAY), my friend across the aisle, and hold him in very high regard. I appreciate very much his comments earlier about what this compact means to Illinois and to Missouri. I know Mr. CLAY has been a leading proponent of this happening, and I really very much appreciate his comments. This will not provide jobs across the country, but it solves a problem. It will ease things for those two States so that jobs should be easier.

And I was totally serious when I offered my colleague who was saying that we were wasting our time on this—I know Mr. CLAY and many others have spent a great deal of time on this, and I didn't think the Democrats that were pushing this bill so hard were wasting our time. I think it's a very legitimate use of our time.

Some people like to confuse the term "interstate," as used in the Constitution; and they want the term "interstate" to be expanded, as it has sometimes, to apply to nothing but activity wholly within one State. The Supreme Court has even given some regard to those kinds of arguments, but this is not one of those cases. This is a matter that's been taken up and passed by the Senate, and we should pass it today. It takes up a matter clearly between two States that makes it interstate.

And then it is not the State of Illinois or Missouri coming and begging for the Federal Government to take over a State responsibility. It is two States with different opinions, different concerns, but wanting things to work together for good, coming to a solution; and then the Federal Government, since it is interstate, must recognize that compact. I think it is an appropriate thing to do. I don't think the Democrats who are pushing this bill were wasting our time. I think it's an appropriate use of Federal time.

With that, I would urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. NOEM). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) that the House suspend the rules and pass the joint resolution, S.J. Res. 22, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

AUTHORIZING AMERICAN LEGION GUIDANCE TO INDIVIDUAL POSTS

Mr. GOHMERT. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 1639) to amend title 36, United States Code, to authorize the American Legion under its Federal charter to provide guidance and leadership to the individual departments and posts of the American Legion, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 1639

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

SECTION 1. ADDITIONAL POWER OF AMERICAN LEGION UNDER FEDERAL CHARTER.

Section 21704 of title 36, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraph (5) through (8) as paragraphs (6) through (9), respectively; and

(2) by inserting after paragraph (4) the following new paragraph (5):

"(5) provide guidance and leadership to organizations and local chapters established under paragraph (4), but may not control or otherwise influence the specific activities and conduct of such organizations and local chapters;"

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) and the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. COHEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GOHMERT. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on S. 1639, currently under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

The American Legion received its Federal charter in 1919 as a patriotic veterans organization. Today, the Legion is America's largest Veterans Service Organization with 2.5 million members. Membership is available to persons who have served in the United States Armed Forces during wartime, including the current war on terrorism, and were honorably discharged or are continuing their service.

□ 1650

The Legion's goals are to uphold and defend the U.S. Constitution, promote worldwide peace and goodwill, and preserve the memories of the two world wars and the other conflicts fought to uphold democracy. The Legion also aims to cement the ties and comradeship born of service and to commit the

efforts of its members to service to the United States.

The American Legion has over 14,000 local posts. The national organization is not designed to have control over all the independent posts. As the Supreme Court of Minnesota has found, local "posts and State chapters are separately incorporated . . . and the posts all have their own constitutions and bylaws." The court found that there was a very limited relationship between the posts and national headquarters.

The national organization's "Officer's Guide and Manual of Ceremonies" states "the post is a separate and distinct unit which can and often does function independently."

The American Legion has asked Congress to amend its Federal charter to specify that the national organization may provide guidance and leadership to the individual departments and posts but that it may not control or otherwise influence the specific activities and conduct of the departments and posts.

The director of the Legion's National Legislative Commission explained the request by stating the following:

"The Legion wants to allow members to renew their memberships and pay their dues to the national organization through the use of a credit card over the Internet . . . Currently, these dues payments flow to the national organization from our posts through our departments. We are concerned that plaintiffs' lawyers would argue this would indicate that the national organization has control over those departments and posts . . . Appearance of control may . . . support a claim of liability against the national organization when a legal dispute against a post arises."

S. 1639 amends the Legion's Federal charter as requested. Our colleague, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ALTMIRE), introduced the House version of the bill, H.R. 2369, which the Judiciary Committee approved by voice vote.

I thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania for his work on this legislation and am pleased to see that his bill has a remarkable 432 cosponsors. It's almost unheard of.

So there are things that this Congress needs to be doing, and there are many things that are very important that this Congress does; but this is something that only the Congress can do. So if we hear from other speakers who want to talk about a jobs bill, I would encourage them to go talk to the Senate about the 15 to 20 jobs bills that they are down there sitting on.

I look forward to the day when the President says that this is a do-nothing Congress that he's no longer half right in making that statement. The House is certainly not a do-nothing House. The Senate is sitting on many bills. This is a bill for which the gentleman from Pennsylvania saw a need, so he stepped up and filled that need, and I appreciate his efforts in doing this.