

that I think is going to be phenomenal once we get it out of the House and Senate conferees. It's taken some time to get us to the point where we can find the efficiencies and savings that we need and continue to provide the level of service we expect in our air transportation system in this country. My fear is we're going to come up with this bipartisan bill and it's going to get stalled again though.

As we stand here on the eve of the State of the Union address, we have the politics of a do-nothing Congress. I hope that that narrative doesn't stop this bill from moving forward as it comes up and we don't have to extend this again.

This is something we've been able to do in a bipartisan nature. Historically, transportation bills have been bipartisan. Let's not let this get stopped and have to kick the can down the road. Let's get our conferees done. Let's get this passed.

I urge everybody, my colleagues, to support this extension. Let's make it the last and get the long-term bill passed for the betterment of this country and everyone in it.

Mr. COSTELLO. I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PETRI. I yield such time as he may consume to the chairman of the full Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, our colleague from the State of Florida, JOHN MICA.

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Chairman PETRI, our chair of the Aviation Subcommittee. I see Mr. COSTELLO, the ranking member, former chair of the subcommittee. Thank you for your work.

We're here to extend FAA for the 23rd time. The consequences of that can, I hope, be positive, that we can conclude this long overdue and very important authorization.

Members of Congress, we must authorize every program. That's part of our constitutional responsibility.

I had the privilege, when I chaired the Aviation Subcommittee, to write a lot of what was in the last bill which we authored in 2003. It expired in 2007. The other side of the aisle had 4 years in which they controlled the body, 2 of which they controlled every branch of government, and were unable to pass that. They passed 17 extensions. We've had to pass—it will now be five—but we can get this done. This should be a bipartisan and must be a bicameral jobs bill.

The aviation industry in our country accounts for between 7 and 8 percent of our gross domestic national economic activity, and for us not to have passed an authorization that updates the safety, all of the programs, the next generation of air traffic control, things that are so important to have a dynamic industry, and then an area of our economy that we have led in in the world. The biggest area of exports is aviation. That's huge for jobs in this country.

So this is going to be the last extension. It's done in, again, a bipartisan effort to conclude the negotiation.

Let me say in conclusion, there are some tough issues on labor that have held us up—4 years with the Democrats, the last year with us—and I want to commend Speaker BOEHNER for his leadership working with the leadership of the Senate. The Speaker and his staff and others have worked day and night through the holidays and right up to now to conclude what I think is a very fair compromise. And it must be a compromise.

This is part of our business is to do the best business we can for the American people and getting this economy working and getting in place the framework for one of the most important aspects of our industry. If we want to see Americans back to work, we'll pass this legislation by the 17th of February, and then we'll come back in the next week or two, and we will pass a long-term infrastructure transportation measure, and we will and we can get Americans working.

So I ask for continued cooperation to complete this important process.

Mr. PETRI. I have no further requests for time, and reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. COSTELLO. Mr. Speaker, let me commend Chairman MICA and Chairman PETRI for working in a bipartisan way. We've attempted to work with the other body in working on an agreement. We are very close to agreement. As I said in my statement, I reserve judgment on the final conference agreement, but I certainly want to commend our friends on the other side of the aisle for working to move this legislation forward.

With that, I urge the passage of this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 1320

Mr. PETRI. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. PETRI) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3800.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MOTION TO INSTRUCT CONFEREES ON H.R. 3630, TEMPORARY PAYROLL TAX CUT CONTINUATION ACT OF 2011

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I have a motion to instruct conferees at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the motion.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mrs. Capps moves that the managers on the part of the House at the conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the Senate amendment to the bill H.R. 3630 be instructed to file a conference report not later than February 17, 2012.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XXII, the gentleman from California (Mrs. CAPPS) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. REED) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mrs. CAPPS. I yield myself 5 minutes.

I rise today to offer a straightforward motion to provide certainty to American families and businesses.

As we all know, late last month, after a lot of drawn-out drama, we enacted a short-term extension of the payroll tax cut, of unemployment insurance, and the so-called doc fix. All of these provisions were set to expire at the end of last year. Payroll taxes would have gone up on 160 million American workers. Millions of unemployed people would have had their benefits cut off even though they still can't find work, and doctors would have faced huge cuts in their reimbursement from Medicare, making it harder for seniors to see a doctor. The 2-month extension was not ideal, but differences could not be resolved before the clock ran out.

Now, with this short-term extension set to expire in just a few weeks, we must find a way to bridge our differences and enact a full-year extension of these provisions, and we need to do it as soon as possible, and that's what this motion is about.

It simply directs the conferees to finish their work by February 17 so both the House and Senate will have time to vote on the final package before the clock runs out on the 29th; just a date certain to ensure that we get our work done without yet another last-minute scramble. We have a habit in this Congress of leaving our work to the last minute, something we should have learned when we were kids when our parents warned us about this long ago.

Last year, for example, was filled with manufactured crises and last-minute deals. It led to a great deal of uncertainty about everything from tax policy to whether or not America will pay its debts. This uncertainty has affected our economy and our efforts to create jobs. I know we can do better. I know we must do better.

Our economy is still in a fragile state, and we must not add to its precarious nature with yet another unnecessary dustup here in Washington and especially not about provisions we generally agree upon. For example, extending the payroll tax cut for 160 million Americans will put a thousand dollars more in their paychecks for a worker in this coming year. In my home State alone, that would put \$21 billion into the pockets of 17 million Californians. That's real money for consumers to spend quickly at small businesses across the country, stimulating demand and growing our economy.

Now, economists from both sides from every perspective agree that this

payroll extension is critical to maintaining our recovery and critical to extending new jobs.

In addition, there is a general agreement about the need to extend unemployment benefits. This affects about 4½ million Americans who would lose their unemployment benefits if we don't get our work done in time. Never before have we allowed emergency unemployment benefits to expire while unemployment remains so high. Millions of middle class workers and their families depend upon emergency unemployment benefits to feed their families, to put gas in their cars, to keep their houses warm.

Once again, extending these benefits helps create jobs, helps to grow our economy. According to Mark Zandi, every dollar of unemployment benefits creates \$1.65 in economic demand. It's not rhetoric. It's a fact.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, we all agree on the need to ensure our doctors don't see a draconian cut in their Medicare reimbursements. Such a cut would affect the health care of nearly 50 million seniors who could lose access to their doctors if we don't complete our work on time. Without an extension, Medicare physicians will see nearly a 30-percent reimbursement cut at the end of this month, and of course this is something we face every year, which is why I have always supported a permanent fix to the SGR. But at a minimum, we must include a full-year fix for this program. Failure to do so will harm not only our doctors and their employees but our seniors as well.

Mr. Speaker, the American people are rightfully tired of the political games and needless brinksmanship that has become all too common in this body. I say it's time to change course.

Let's begin this new year on a better note. Let's begin the year by putting aside our differences and working together. Let's begin the new year by completing the work that we all were sent here to do, and let's do it on time and without unnecessary drama.

Let's begin the new year by helping middle class families and small businesses stay afloat in these tough times. It's way too important to wait until the last minute. Millions of American workers, business owners, and families are depending on us. The time to act is now.

I urge my colleagues to support this motion to ensure that we get our work done on time.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I rise today in great agreement with my colleague from California on the other side of the aisle. What she has articulated before us in this Chamber, Mr. Speaker, is an instruction to the conferees, of which I am one, to get our job done. I wholeheartedly agree with that sentiment.

Also, there is a tremendous amount of agreement when it comes to the pay-

roll tax extension to get an extension for at least a year, to extend unemployment benefits, and also to do what we have to do in Washington, D.C., in regards to our providers under Medicare with our doc fix.

We have proposed and passed in this Chamber before the end of the year a 1-year proposal on the payroll tax extension fully paid for, a 2-year proposal on our doc fix fully paid for. Those are long-term solutions that have been offered by our side of the aisle, adopted in a bipartisan fashion before the end of the year, and sent to the Senate to act upon.

The reality of the situation finds us in a position where the Senate has not done its job. And my colleague from California is correct. A lot of it had to do with the fact that the Senate ran out of time, and they reverted to classic, old political ways of doing business: passing legislation at 3 o'clock, 2 o'clock in the morning, waiting until the last minute, and putting forth a product that only allowed us to kick the can 2 months down the road.

We can do better. We need to do better. The proposal that came out of this Chamber was a start in that right direction. It is time that we join together and we hit this long-term solution put forth for the American people because they deserve no less.

I would be remiss if we did not identify the fact that we as conferees were here over the Christmas break. We were here trying to champion the cause for making sure we put policy into law, not achieve political gamesmanship or wins. It is time for us to focus on policy and put politics aside. Hardworking taxpayers deserve that today in America.

I, for one, will join my colleague on the other side of the aisle in the tremendous amount of agreement that I think we have going into this conference and the sentiment of getting the job done in time, not waiting until the last minute, coming up with a long-term solution of at least a year on our payroll tax extension, at least 2 years for our doctors who are getting reimbursed under Medicare, and take care of the unemployment situation.

□ 1330

But I would have to disagree with my colleague on the other side of the aisle when she says that unemployment benefits are some sort of economic stimulus that should be expanded. I understand, and I have read what the economists have said on the economic impact of unemployment benefits.

My point would be, if that logic were true, then why don't we just extend unemployment benefits to every American and sit back and watch the economy blossom. The fundamental truth is—and it's time to be open and honest with the American people about it—that the economy is not going to strengthen based on government expansion, government spending. It's going to strengthen on a commitment

to small-business America laying the foundation upon which the private sector knows that there is certainty, there is confidence in the market, and they have the ability to know what the rules are going to be for years to come, not on a month-by-month basis.

I urge my colleagues in the other Chamber, in the U.S. Senate, to heed that fundamental message. We can no longer, in Washington, D.C., believe that short-term policy is the best we can do for America. Hardworking taxpayers deserve better than that, and small business owners across America need to know what the rules are with certainty and for years so that they can make the investments to put our hardworking taxpayer Americans back to work.

That's what we stand for on this side of the aisle; and that is what I am hopeful, going into this conference, we will be able to produce out of this payroll bill, unemployment extension, and our doc fix.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE).

Ms. LEE of California. I want to thank the gentlelady for yielding and also for her tremendous leadership.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to encourage all the conferees on H.R. 3630 to fully consider the chilling effect on the economy of any failure to fully extend unemployment benefits.

While we are all pleased to see the economy slowly improving, unemployment rates continue to be unacceptably high; and, yes, there are four individuals looking for every one job. This job recovery still has not created enough jobs in our country.

I have participated in many job fairs in my district, along with the Congressional Black Caucus; and we have witnessed thousands and thousands and thousands of people lining up for the jobs that existed. People want to work. It's not that people are sitting around waiting for their unemployment benefits. If there were jobs, people would work. So we need this bridge over troubled waters until we find out a way to create the jobs that people deserve.

We must immediately extend all expiring unemployment benefits. The conferees should also strongly consider adding an additional 14 weeks of tier 1 unemployment benefits for the millions of 99ers who have completely exhausted their benefits. We don't remember that even with the extension of unemployment, there are between 2 and 3 million people who will not be eligible because 99 weeks is the limit.

So we can't abandon those individuals. We have to pass, and we're asking for Congressman SCOTT's bill and my bill, H.R. 589, to be included in any final legislative agreement.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am pleading for this body to really understand that until we figure out a way to create jobs, people want to work. It is our

moral responsibility to create this extension of unemployment benefits to include an additional 14 weeks for people who have hit the 99-week mark. That's our duty and our responsibility, and I hope that you'll put this in our package.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, January 23, 2012.

Hon. DAVE CAMP,

*Chairman, Committee on Ways and Means,
House of Representatives, Longworth HOB,
Washington, DC.*

Hon. MAX BAUCUS,

*Chairman, Committee on Finance, U.S. Senate,
Dirksen SOB, Washington, DC.*

DEAR CHAIRMAN CAMP AND CHAIRMAN BAUCUS: As you and your colleagues on the conference committee address the extension of payroll tax relief and unemployment compensation benefits, restoration of Medicare payments to physicians, and other matter, I urge you to fully consider the ongoing impacts of the crisis in unemployment and long term unemployment, not only on the millions of affected individuals and families who are living life on the edge, but to also consider the impact on our nation's struggling economy.

While we see some slow improvements in the jobs numbers, unemployment rates continue to be unacceptably high and the rates of long term unemployment as well the length of time that the unemployed are out of work are both at record highs.

We must immediately extend the expiring emergency unemployment benefits to the maximum authorized levels and we should also immediately add an additional 14 weeks of tier I unemployment benefits for the millions of Americans who have completely exhausted their benefits while struggling to find work.

Far too many Americans have exhausted all of their unemployment benefits and are still unable to find work. Abandoning these job seekers will only further depress the economy and will fail to reduce our deficits as these so called 99er's will begin to fall into poverty and begin to be eligible for other needs based federal benefits.

With nearly 50 million Americans in poverty and half of all Americans in low income households, we must take bold action now. It is only by providing these millions of struggling American families with adequate and immediate relief and a genuine long term pathway out of poverty that we can put America back on track to prosperity and economic growth for all.

I strongly urge the members of the conference committee to consider my legislation, H.R. 589 for inclusion in any final legislative agreement.

Sincerely,

BARBARA LEE,
Member of Congress.

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

I would like to respond to my colleague on the other side of the aisle who just spoke in regard to when it comes to unemployment benefit extensions.

What we have to do, in my opinion, is set the framework upon which jobs in America could be created. We just had an example of this last week. I so hope our President tonight in this very Chamber comes and explains his decision to reject American jobs being created through the Keystone pipeline, because there is a project that has been identified; and it will be implemented

in a way that would create an immediate 20,000 new jobs for men and women in America.

That will go a long way to solving our unemployment problems in the United States, not just extending unemployment benefits. But as we take up the issue of extending unemployment benefits, we need to do better. We owe it to hardworking taxpayers of America to come up with solutions and reforms in our unemployment benefits programs that give them the tools, the resources to be reemployed.

I agree wholeheartedly with my colleague on the other side of the aisle that I don't believe the majority of Americans wants to be unemployed. They want to get back to work.

So in our reforms that were passed in this Chamber before the end of the year, we talk about such things as requiring GEDs, high school education equivalency diplomas, high school degrees so that people could have that basic educational benefit that will give them the tools to get back to work. We should be focusing together in a bipartisan manner, Democrat and Republican, on reforms that are going to give those tools to our unemployed Americans rather than just giving a check.

There is an old adage that I grew up with, being the youngest of 12 children, that was passed on for generations in our family, which was: You give a man a fish, you feed him for a day. You teach a man or woman to fish, you feed him and her and their entire family for a lifetime.

That is the mantra. That is the foundation upon which we should take up unemployment extension in this conference and join hands to implement going forward.

Again, I have to highlight the fact that what we see out of the other Chamber in the United States Senate is a willingness to just achieve what is politically possible, to only achieve what could be called a political win. It is time to stop focusing on politics. Hardworking taxpayers in America deserve us to focus on good policy.

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

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY).

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support the Capps motion to instruct conferees.

This issue is just too important to get tied up in election-year politics. Failing to extend the payroll tax cut, unemployment insurance, and the Medicare doc fix will have real and lasting effects on our Nation's middle class. It will mean that fewer doctors will be available to care for seniors and the aging baby boomer generation. It will mean that people who have lost their job through no fault of their own will have the safety net pulled out from under them, and it will mean that working families will see their paychecks shrink.

Americans don't want partisan gridlock. They want jobs, they want eco-

nomic security, and they want access to health care. I urge my colleagues, support the Capps motion and put our families first.

Mr. REED. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. CASTOR).

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. I thank our colleague, Representative CAPPS, for yielding time and for her great leadership on behalf of middle class families across America.

I rise to encourage all of our colleagues to get to work on middle class tax relief and also take this opportunity to strengthen Medicare. We're going to have a lot of debates over Medicare here in the coming year.

□ 1340

This will be an opportunity to address a real shortcoming in Medicare, and that is protecting our parents and grandparents and the ability that they have to see the doctor of their choice. See, what will happen if the Congress does not act is there will be instituted very harsh cuts to the reimbursement rate for doctors who take care of our parents and take care of our grandparents under Medicare. We simply can't let this happen.

Democrats are interested in a permanent fix to these Medicare cuts to doctors. This is vitally important for tens of millions of our parents and grandparents all across America. And you better believe in the State of Florida, where we have 3.4 million seniors who rely on Medicare, we want to ensure that the ability of the doctor that they trust, that they see time and time again, will be there when they make that appointment in the doctor's office. We're interested in a permanent fix. We think working together we can get this done.

Medicare is that promise that has been made to generation after generation of Americans; that it will be there no matter what happens, how hard they work, what happens in their lifetime, Medicare will be there to serve them, and we need to ensure that the doctors are there on the front lines to take care of our parents and grandparents as well.

Mr. REED. Mr. Speaker, again I'm heartened because, as the gentlelady spoke, I came to the conclusion we're in full agreement. House Republicans are in full agreement, so that gives us hope, ladies and gentlemen. That gives us hope going into this conference that what we're going to be able to put together with the doc fix and how our providers are paid under Medicare is a solution that will be a long-term solution to this situation that politically is required to go through all the time because of this doc fix situation we find ourselves in.

But I would remind this Chamber and I would remind all of my colleagues that we are in the midst of a fiscal crisis in this Nation that needs to be respected. And as we talk about making

sure that our providers under Medicare are taken care of on a long-term basis, we need to go into this discussion with our eyes wide open, and that is that fiscal crisis forces us to cover these costs, for us to be responsible in Washington, DC, for one time and pay for what we are doing and live within our means.

That's what our proposal for 2 years out of the House Chamber before the end of year passed by a bipartisan fashion did—took care of 2 years of the doc fix, fully paid for and offset. What we need to do is bring that attitude into the conference to get it taken care of.

I so heartily agree with my colleague, the esteemed lady, and her position in coming up with a long-term solution for our doctors under Medicare. But we do need to be responsible and we have to offset and make sure that it is paid for. That is the reality of the situation we find ourselves in in America in the fiscal crisis we now face, and it will be the reality of our Nation's fiscal prosperity going forward if we so choose to honor it.

With that, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. ANDREWS).

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

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, we hear that there is agreement over some basic principles here. Just about everyone thinks we should extend the middle class tax cut for the rest of this year. Just about everyone thinks we should make sure that doctors don't see a nearly 30 percent cut in the payments that they receive to take care of our seniors and disabled persons under Medicare. Most of us think that unemployment benefits should be extended at a time when there are four people unemployed for every one job opening in the country.

Most people believe that most if not all of this should be paid for; that is to say that we shouldn't borrow the money to do these things. The amount of money that's needed to do that is about \$3 out of every \$1,000 that we're going to spend here. It's significant money, but it's about \$3 out of every \$1,000 that we spend.

So here's the idea behind this motion. Since there is such broad agreement that this middle class tax cut and the other provisions need to happen, since there is such broad agreement that it ought to be offset in part, if not fully, and since it's such a relatively small amount of money, \$3 for every \$1,000 we're going to spend, let's not wait until the very last minute to do it.

The history of 2011 is littered with the majority waiting until the eleventh hour. And it was more than just an inconvenience for the legislative process. In August when the markets melted down, it turned out to be a crisis for the country and the global economy. Let's not take that chance again.

So if everybody is so much in agreement, vote for this motion. What it says is let's not wait until February 29. They gave us a leap year this year, so let's not stretch it. Let's not wait until February 29 at midnight. Let's get this done no later than February 17 to get this done in an orderly fashion.

The American people are tired of a Congress that has the study habits of a student who parties all semester and crams for the finals. Let's get serious, let's grow up, and let's vote for this motion.

Mr. REED. Mr. Speaker, I do have to remind my good friend on the other side of the aisle that, on December 22, House Republicans were here. We were sitting in the conference ready to get to work, and conferees on their side of the aisle had not even been named by that point in time.

I was here over the New Year's break, Thursday, Friday, working on this issue in preparation for the conference. Where was the Senate? Nowhere to be found. So let us be straight with the American people. Let's be open and honest with the American people that who's ready to do the work is us in the House Chamber on the House Republican side. We demonstrated it at the end of 2011 by staying here. We may have been hurt politically or lost that political battle. But you know what? The American people want us to do not what is politically the winning strategy, but what is the best policy for the American people. And that's what we stood up for.

Maybe that message didn't get home to the men and women back in our districts immediately. But I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, when I went back in my district and I had the question presented to me at my local church, local grocery store, why were you still down there? What was the problem? What were you fighting for? And we went through the details of the policy that we're talking about here with the payroll tax rate, the unemployment extension, and the Medicare reimbursement for our providers under Medicare, and they said: Well, obviously, you needed to stay there to get it done. And that's what we have to do. We have to adopt the attitude of, we have been sent here to do the people's work. It's time not for us to wait until the last minute, I wholeheartedly agree. But it's also time that we just do not leave town because we've accomplished what was politically possible or what was in our political interest. I wholeheartedly am committed to finding the real solutions, the real policy initiatives, and that's what we are standing for on this side of the aisle.

With that, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire how much time remains on each side?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Each side has 18 minutes remaining.

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to yield 2 minutes to the gen-

tleman from Connecticut (Mr. COURTNEY).

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Capps motion, which again says that we should move as swiftly as possible to resolve all of these issues.

In support of that, I just want to share with the body a survey that was released by the Connecticut Medical Society a few days ago. It's the largest physician group in the State of Connecticut. It asked what the impact would be if the SGR 27 percent rate cut went into effect. It would be catastrophic: 40 percent of doctors would stop accepting Medicare patients; 10 percent would close their practices; 32 percent would lay off staff. But what was interesting was that 19 percent said they are already refusing to take new appointments of Medicare beneficiaries and are curtailing access for both Medicare and Tricare patients all across the State of Connecticut.

So clearly, this is not an issue which can wait until the last minute. People are already voting with their feet, and it's affecting access to health care literally as we sit here today in the House Chamber.

I also would just like to remind the gentleman from New York that the measure that the Republicans passed in December, which supposedly addressed this issue, paid for the SGR fix by taking \$40 billion out of the hospital accounts in Medicare.

□ 1350

So in the name of protecting physician fees, they butchered the other part of the system and the central part of the system in terms of hospital access which provides emergency care all across this country. The American Hospital Association and others clearly warned this Chamber and the Senate that this cut would be extremely damaging and catastrophic to the American health care system. And the fact that the Senate did not just rubber-stamp what the House did, in my opinion, shows that they acted appropriately.

It is extremely urgent for the American health care system that we pass and follow the Capps motion's timeline to fix this issue, frankly an issue which has festered since the 1990s when the Republicans passed the SGR formula. This is not part of the Affordable Care Act. In fact, at the time we passed the Affordable Care Act, it abolished the SGR with H.R. 3662. We should follow that path at the end of the day, and we should certainly follow the timeline of the Capps motion.

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

I so appreciate my colleague reminding me of the offsets on the doc fix bill. And I would just like to remind my colleagues on the other side of the aisle and this entire Chamber that in the House-passed bill that was sent to the Senate, 90 percent—90 percent—of those offsets were recommended and

supported by the President of the United States, President Obama.

Now, I'm not saying that that's the final thing that we can agree to. By no means am I saying that. But what I will say is that we did our work. We found common ground with the President's own recommendations and policies that he supported and sent it to the Senate. At this point in time, I still remind the American people who is at the table: the House. Where is the United States Senate? And may I remind the Speaker and the American people, I say the entire Senate but, in particular, those on the other side of the aisle.

With that, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. CAPPS. I am pleased to yield, Mr. Speaker, 2 minutes to our colleague from New Jersey (Mr. PASCRELL).

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, in just a few hours, the President of the United States will be on the floor to present his ideas as to how we can grow our economy and put the American people back to work. I hope the majority keeps an open mind and rejects the extreme ideology and political timidity that has driven the 112th Congress of the United States.

Need I remind my friend from New York State, need I remind him that the tax cuts of 2001 and 2003, as we move into this next decade, are the biggest cause and the biggest proportion of the deficit facing this Congress. And you are not going to—you are not going to nickel and dime us to solve the problem of the deficit on the backs of the middle class and the working poor. It doesn't work. You can't figure it out.

While the economic indicators are showing pretty good improvements, the unemployment rate in my home State of New Jersey is still 9.1 percent, above the national average of 8.5. Because of games played by the extreme wing of the Republican Party, the payroll tax cut that President Obama and the Democratic Congress support is at risk of expiring again.

Now, I can't say any clearer than this: \$1,000 may not be a lot for millionaires like Mitt Romney paying a 13.9 percent tax rate, but it is a significant amount of money directly in the pockets of middle class families in north Jersey.

You don't have to look far to see where we are still hurting. Just last month, Mr. Speaker, the construction industry unemployment rate jumped another 3 percent to 16 percent. Passing the payroll tax cut will help grow the economy and get the American people back to work.

Isn't that what we want?

Mr. REED. Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield 1 minute to my good friend from Missouri (Mr. LONG).

Mr. LONG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the issue of the payroll tax extension—holiday—whatever you want to call it, and the doc fix that we address every single year here in this

Congress. At the end of last year, we went home. We did our work. We extended the payroll tax holiday for 1 full year. We did the doc fix for 2 years. When I got to the airport in Dallas, Texas, we got a call that the Senate had sent back over a bill here that was going to pay the doctors taking care of our seniors on Medicare for 2 months. I think, if I remember right, they had three different plans. It would either take care for 2 months, 8 weeks, or 60 days. That's the only three programs they looked at in the Senate. Then they sent it back over here, and then they try and blame us, saying we're not for the payroll tax extension. We were for it for a year; we were for the doc fix for 2 years.

I think it is ridiculous that the Senate cannot do their work, just like we haven't had a budget out of the Senate in 1,000 days.

Mrs. CAPPS. I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to our colleague from North Carolina, DAVID PRICE.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the motion to instruct and want to thank our colleague from Santa Barbara for offering it.

Last year, as we lurched from one congressionally created crisis to another, uncertainty plagued families and businesses, and the American people's confidence in our ability to do their work plummeted.

In the first few months of the new year, we can right these wrongs. We can proceed in a deliberative, mature manner to address our Nation's problems.

As the President will reiterate tonight in his State of the Union Address, this is a make-or-break moment for our economic recovery, for our middle class and those trying to reach the middle class. Extending the payroll tax cut will put an average of \$1,000 in the pockets of working people this year. Let's not play games by threatening to raise taxes on 160 million workers if you don't get your way on one bargaining chip or another.

We should pass a full-year extension of the payroll tax cut right away and then move on to the President's broader jobs bill that would create jobs and put us on a faster road to recovery.

Mr. REED. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. CAPPS. I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to our colleague from New York (Mr. CROWLEY).

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend and colleague, Mrs. CAPPS, for yielding this time and for spearheading this resolution which will simply end the "dog ate my homework" excuse my Republican colleagues have repeatedly used when refusing to do more than the bare minimum that our job requires.

I'm a father of three children all under the age of 13. My kids are the best. I love them dearly. But they are like most: they don't like doing their homework, and they often wait until

the last minute to get it done, despite my wife's and my best efforts to see otherwise. While this behavior is common in households across America, it is not acceptable in the workforce, and it ought not be acceptable here in the Halls of Congress. Yet, this is how the Republican leadership has gone about our business here in Congress.

This Congress almost let the United States of America default on its bills. This Congress almost prevented Social Security checks from going out to every American senior because they wanted their way or the highway. This Congress almost refused to pass a middle class tax cut for Americans before the holidays because they didn't believe middle class Americans deserve one.

And here we are today. The majority has refused for weeks to even begin discussions on the payroll tax even though Democrats named their conferees several weeks ago and have been ready to talk ever since.

President Obama has been waiting for any word from my Republican colleagues. He's made clear he wants to talk, negotiate, and get this done. But the Republicans have clearly been in no rush to get a tax cut passed for the middle class.

Today, with the passage of Mrs. CAPPS' resolution, that will all come to an end. The middle class will go to the front and center of this Congress, and it's about time. We cannot wait until the last second once again. We have the chance to pass a bill that will provide the typical American family earning \$50,000 a year over \$1,000 in tax cuts—tax cuts they will see in every paycheck.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mrs. CAPPS. I yield 30 seconds to our colleague.

Mr. CROWLEY. We have the chance to ensure the doctors treating seniors on Medicare can continue to do so without having to charge them higher fees for medical care. We have the chance to continue unemployment benefits for those who lost their jobs by no fault of their own and are actively looking for work.

The majority has a simple choice today: pass this resolution and make it clear it's our shared goal—Republicans and Democrats alike—to help hard-working Americans who are struggling in this economy; or reject this bill and continue playing the same games that have become the hallmark of this do-nothing Congress.

□ 1400

The fact is the American people don't have time for these games anymore. Stop the games. Pass this motion to instruct conferees.

Mr. REED. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to my colleague from Wisconsin (Mr. RYAN).

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I enjoy listening to revisionist history as is practiced here on the floor of the House of Representatives.

Our friends on the other side are saying that we haven't done our job, that we're not doing our work. Well, let's think about this for a second. It was the House Republicans that passed the full-year extension last year of the payroll tax and the unemployment extension. It was the House Republicans that named the conferees to get this work done. Let's think about who is and who is not getting their job done.

This year marks the second year in a row where the President has literally flouted the law and is delaying his budget. It's 2 years that the President hasn't brought the budget on time as according to law. Today is 1,000 days since the other body in the United States Senate bothered to even try to pass, let alone propose, a budget.

We acted responsibly. We acted in time. And, more to the point, Mr. Speaker, if we're going to have a temporary tax holiday for payroll taxes, let's never forget the fact that payroll taxes finance Social Security. This is why we insist on spending cuts—to make sure that Social Security is intact, remains whole. The failure to cut spending to pay for this temporary tax holiday means complicity with raiding the Social Security trust fund, and we are not in favor of that.

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, may I ask, please, how much time I have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WOMACK). The gentlewoman from California has 10 minutes remaining.

Mrs. CAPPS. With that, may I just remind our colleagues that we went lurching from one crisis to another during the past year, first about our debt ceiling default crisis, then whether or not we could even continue the government. Then we spent some time shutting down the FAA. So that's the reason behind this motion to instruct conferees in terms of getting on time.

Now I would like to yield 2 minutes to our colleague from New York (Mr. ENGEL).

Mr. ENGEL. I thank the gentlewoman for yielding to me. I rise in strong support of her motion, and I urge my colleagues to do so as well.

Today is a day of bipartisanship. The President is speaking to us. We should really show it. We should really put our money where our mouths are. It may be true, as the gentleman just said on the other side of the aisle, that the Republicans passed a year of a payroll tax break, yeah, but they put poison pills in it. They put Keystone in it. They put Medicare restrictions in it.

We want a clean bill. We want a year's bill, but let it be a clean bill. Let it be a bill that is not mixed in with anything else, no poison pills. I challenge my friends on the other side of the aisle to do that. This is what we should be doing. The American people want it.

There are still significant differences between the two parties on the specifics. Let's resolve them. Let's resolve them sooner rather than later. The

American people are saying Congress is dysfunctional. Congress can't even agree on a bill, which everyone agrees. And this is more reason why we should pass this and show that we should not be playing politics on something that's so vital to people's lives. We should not wait until the very last minute to reach an agreement.

This motion simply instructs conferees to finish negotiations by February 17; and by doing so, we'd avoid the confusion and uncertainty that happened last time when the Congress waited until the last minute for the last extension. We need these tax breaks for the middle class. We need the doc fix. We need unemployment benefits for those who have been hurt most by the prolonged economic downturn.

Let's not play politics with people on these issues. I urge the conferees to quickly reach an agreement that will not hurt the unemployed and will help continue our economic recovery.

So again, Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this motion so that we don't take this debate to the last minute again, make us look like fools and play games with people's lives. Let's pass this. Let's do it now. Let's not wait. Let's stop the political games.

Mr. REED. Mr. Speaker, I'd just remind my good colleague on the other side of the aisle that we were here. The House Republicans were here December 22. December 26, conferees weren't even named yet. I was here Thursday and Friday of New Year's working on the issue.

We're ready to do the work. But there is one thing that we will not yield on, that we have demonstrated years in Washington, DC, of fiscal irresponsibility. And until we came in, this freshman class in November 2010, there was an attitude of, Don't worry about how we're going to cover it; don't worry about how we're going to pay for it.

That attitude has changed, and that's why I'm proud to yield 2 minutes to a fellow freshman Member from North Carolina (Mrs. ELLMERS).

Mrs. ELLMERS. I thank my freshman colleague from New York for yielding.

I've been watching this discussion, this debate going on, and I am once again amazed by the issue.

I am in favor of this motion to instruct. In fact, I am so much in favor of it that I wish we weren't here talking about it right now. I wish we had finished the people's work in 2011. As my colleague has pointed out, we were here. This idea that somehow we don't work up until the minute, Mr. Speaker, this is ridiculous. This is absolutely ridiculous. This is nothing more than a dog and pony show.

As a conferee, I am anxious to begin the House and Senate-level meetings and to learn about what policy pathway will get us to the yearlong extension we are all seeking, what we voted

for, what we passed in the House of Representatives—bipartisan effort, mind you. I am waiting to see what the Senate has to say about this on this 1,000th day of their not even passing a budget. The Senate's willingness to produce a plan is critical to giving employers, workers, and those seeking to reenter the workforce certainty they need.

Again, I am ready to work on this issue. My colleagues are ready to work on this issue. We were ready to fix this problem in 2011, where it should have been left, so that into 2012 we could provide certainty for the American people.

I support this effort, and let's get to work.

Mrs. CAPPS. Before I yield time, I just want to congratulate the conferees for finally meeting today for the very first time, at least 5 weeks after they were appointed. So that's the point.

I am pleased now to yield 2 minutes to our colleague from Texas, SHEILA JACKSON LEE.

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. I thank the gentlelady from California for the recognition and also for the leadership.

I might say to my colleagues that whenever we come to the floor of the House to do the people's business it is an important effort, and this motion to instruct is truly the people's business. I want to applaud you for framing the urgency of answering the call of doing what we need to do with respect to 160 million Americans who need payroll tax relief—again, tax cuts for middle class and working Americans, not a discriminatory treatment of only the top 1 percent being able to sing the song "Oh Happy Day," but to allow those who get up every day, some working with their hands, some working with the genius of their minds, and being able to get tax relief from this Congress.

I also know that the American people are looking for immediate relief as it relates to jobs. And I join with my colleague, Chairman LARSON of the Democratic Caucus, about the American Jobs Act and the President's initiative on putting teachers and firefighters, police and construction workers to work, creating jobs and cutting taxes to put in the American people's pockets, and, as well, to provide job training and extended unemployment incentives.

But I do raise this question as we look to protect Medicare and, yes, to provide the doctor fix, which is so important to Houston, with the large Texas Medical Center and the large population of seniors. I join with my colleagues to urgently move toward that. But may I make it very clear that unemployment benefits are not a handout. It is not given to people who have not worked. It is given to blue collar workers. It's given to white collar workers. It's given to people who have worked and contributed to this economy. For my friends on the other side of the aisle to suggest in the most

insulting way to give drug tests and to suggest that people need a GED, I can assure you people want to get a GED. But when you talk of the body politic of unemployed workers, 14 million people can't find jobs because there are no jobs to be found, and we are working to create jobs.

So the issue is: Help us pass the American Jobs Act, and help recognize that those who get unemployment benefits, Mr. Speaker, are Americans who have worked, who deserve this kind of insurance.

I join in passing the payroll tax motion to instruct and the unemployment benefits. Let's do it now.

□ 1410

Mr. REED. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. CAPPS. I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to our colleague from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH).

Mr. KUCINICH. I agree with Representative CAPPS in that we shouldn't wait. We have to move quickly to eliminate any uncertainty that American families have in planning their budget or any uncertainty that they may have as to whether or not they're going to get unemployment benefits.

We in this Congress have certainty in much of our lives, especially with the fact that we get paid every month. But if you are out there and you have a really tight budget or you are unemployed or you are a senior trying to make sure you can go to your doctor of choice, this motion that the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. CAPPS) has is very important because we need to recognize that the middle class has been under enormous financial stress. With the wealth of the country accelerating upward, middle class people have been looking for a break.

If I'm right, this legislation will provide up to \$1,000 for the year for a middle class family, which would be a great break for many families. This middle class tax break is imperative. Unemployment benefits for those who have not been able, despite their best efforts, to find a place in the job market are absolutely essential. There are 13 million people who are unemployed. There are a tremendous number of unemployed people in my own State of Ohio. They are looking to see, are we going to help them eliminate the uncertainty? That is why the Capps amendment is important, because we move forward quickly to show them, we are there for you. And the senior citizens, they want to make sure they can get their doctors of choice, and doctors want to make sure they are going to be paid what is appropriate.

So I rise to support this amendment. Let's remember the middle class taxpayers. Let's remember those who are unemployed. Let's remember seniors who want to see the doctor of their choice. Let's remember doctors who want to get paid a fair amount. And let's pass this Capps amendment.

Mr. REED. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would just like to say simply this, that

we wholeheartedly agree with the general sentiment that has been brought to the House Chamber today, with the motion that is before this body, that we need to do our work in the conference. We cannot wait until the last minute. We wholeheartedly join in that sentiment, and we have demonstrated that commitment by what we have already done. Our actions should speak louder than our words.

The House Republicans were here on December 22, asking the Senate to come back to the table and do the people's work. And we are ready to do that work now. We need the Senate to come to the table in good faith, finalize this package on a long-term basis, bring certainty to our payroll tax rates, bring certainty to our providers, how they get paid under Medicare, and take care of the unemployment extension situation. But we must go into this conference with our eyes wide open.

We were sent to Washington in November 2010 because the American people recognized the fiscal crisis that is coming to our shores in America if we don't get our debt under control, and the habit that creates it; the spending problem of Washington, D.C., corrected once and for all, or we will not have a future in America. And that is unacceptable to me, as a father of two, and as the father of three, the gentleman from New York (Mr. CROWLEY) on the other side of the aisle, also indicated. We are fighting for our children and our grandchildren who have yet to see the face of this Earth.

So I join with my colleagues in sending a message that we will do the work. The hardworking taxpayers in America deserve no less. The U.S. Senate should come to the table, find a solution to these issues, and we will wholeheartedly join hands on our side of the aisle when we do it in a responsible way that will take care of this situation in a long-term fashion, not the short-term Band-Aid that Washington, D.C., for so long has thought is good policy at the expense of the hardworking taxpayers of America.

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

Mrs. CAPPS. I yield myself the remainder of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I will say to my colleague from New York, being here in December, as you mentioned a few times, it was December 22 that Senator MCCONNELL—actually several Senators said to us, Don't just be here, but get to work. Again, I acknowledge that, today, the conferees are meeting for the first time.

In closing, I just want to make a few quick points: first, to remind our colleagues what is in this motion. It simply says that the conference should finish its work and report it back to the House by February 17. It doesn't speak to specific outcomes, just that we get our work done and do it in a timely fashion. It is very clear that we need to come together and work on the problems that the American people have

sent us here to address. They are rightfully tired of the endless drama and the political posturing in Washington, D.C. They know we can do better, and we know it too.

Second of all, we pretty much agree on the need for the basic provisions of this bill—the extension of the payroll tax cut, a tax cut for middle class, hardworking families, an extension of unemployment benefits, and a doc fix for Medicare providers for the rest of the year.

Third, it sounds like we all want to get these issues resolved as quickly as possible. There was a lot of agreement here on the floor during the past hour. So I hope we can all agree now to pass this simple and commonsense motion to instruct the conferees to get their work done over the next 3 weeks so that we can get our work done here on the floor and get moving to the agenda that we know lies before us.

I urge my colleagues to support this motion, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. CAPPS).

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

Mrs. CAPPS. 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.

□ 1420

EXPRESSING SENSE OF HOUSE REGARDING FEDERAL BUDGET

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 516) expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the passage of a fiscal year 2013 Federal budget is of national importance.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 516

Whereas the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 established the modern budgeting process;

Whereas the President is required to submit a budget to Congress each year;

Whereas the last time the House of Representatives passed a budget was on April 15, 2011;

Whereas the last time the Senate passed a budget was on April 29, 2009; and

Whereas people in the United States must routinely set budgets for themselves, their businesses, and their families: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the House of Representatives that the passage of a fiscal year 2013 Federal budget is of national importance.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. RYAN) and the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) each will control 20 minutes.