

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. BISHOP OF UTAH

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I offer an amendment to the resolution. The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

At the end of the resolution, add the following:

SEC. 5. It shall be in order at any time through the legislative day of April 26, 2013, for the Speaker to entertain motions that the House suspend the rules as though under clause 1 of rule XV.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the amendment and on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

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

The amendment was agreed to.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the resolution, as amended.

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

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 231, nays 177, not voting 24, as follows:

[Roll No. 124]

YEAS—231

Aderholt	Duffy	Joyce
Alexander	Duncan (SC)	Kelly (PA)
Amash	Duncan (TN)	King (IA)
Amodei	Ellmers	King (NY)
Bachmann	Farenthold	Kingston
Bachus	Fincher	Kinzinger (IL)
Barber	Fitzpatrick	Kline
Barletta	Fleischmann	Labrador
Barr	Fleming	LaMalfa
Benishek	Forbes	Lamborn
Bentivolio	Fortenberry	Lance
Bera (CA)	Fox	Lankford
Billrakis	Franks (AZ)	Latham
Bishop (UT)	Frelinghuysen	Latta
Black	Gabbard	LoBiondo
Blackburn	Garcia	Long
Bonner	Gardner	Lucas
Boustany	Garrett	Luetkemeyer
Bridenstine	Gerlach	Lummis
Brooks (AL)	Gibbs	Maffei
Brooks (IN)	Gibson	Marino
Broun (GA)	Gingrey (GA)	Massie
Buchanan	Gohmert	McCarthy (CA)
Bucshon	Goodlatte	McCaul
Calvert	Gosar	McClintock
Camp	Gowdy	McHenry
Campbell	Graves (GA)	McIntyre
Cantor	Graves (MO)	McKeon
Capito	Griffin (AR)	McKinley
Carney	Griffith (VA)	McMorris
Carter	Grimm	Rodgers
Cassidy	Guthrie	Meadows
Chabot	Hall	Meehan
Chaffetz	Hanna	Messer
Coble	Harper	Mica
Coffman	Harris	Miller (FL)
Cole	Hartzler	Miller (MI)
Collins (GA)	Hastings (WA)	Miller, Gary
Collins (NY)	Heck (NV)	Mullin
Cook	Herrera Beutler	Mulvaney
Costa	Holding	Murphy (FL)
Cotton	Horsford	Murphy (PA)
Crawford	Hudson	Neugebauer
Crenshaw	Huelskamp	Noem
Culberson	Huizenga (MI)	Nugent
Daines	Hultgren	Nunes
Davis, Rodney	Hunter	Olson
DeFazio	Hurt	Owens
Denham	Issa	Palazzo
Dent	Jenkins	Paulsen
DeSantis	Johnson (OH)	Pearce
DesJarlais	Johnson, Sam	Perry
Diaz-Balart	Jones	Peters (CA)
Duckworth	Jordan	Petri

Pittenger	Rothfus
Pitts	Royce
Poe (TX)	Runyan
Pompeo	Ryan (WI)
Posey	Salmon
Price (GA)	Scalise
Radel	Schweikert
Reed	Scott, Austin
Reichert	Sensenbrenner
Renacci	Shimkus
Ribble	Shuster
Rice (SC)	Simpson
Rigell	Sinema
Roby	Smith (NE)
Roe (TN)	Smith (NJ)
Rogers (AL)	Smith (TX)
Rogers (KY)	Southerland
Rogers (MI)	Stewart
Rohrabacher	Stivers
Rokita	Stockman
Rooney	Terry
Ros-Lehtinen	Thompson (PA)
Roskam	Thornberry
Ross	Tiberi

NAYS—177

Andrews	Gutierrez	Pallone
Barrow (GA)	Hahn	Pascarell
Bass	Hanabusa	Pastor (AZ)
Beatty	Hastings (FL)	Payne
Becerra	Heck (WA)	Pelosi
Bishop (GA)	Higgins	Perlmutter
Bishop (NY)	Himes	Peters (MI)
Blumenauer	Hinojosa	Peterson
Bonamici	Holt	Pingree (ME)
Brady (PA)	Honda	Pocan
Braley (IA)	Hoyer	Price (NC)
Brown (FL)	Huffman	Quigley
Brownley (CA)	Israel	Rahall
Bustos	Jackson Lee	Rangel
Butterfield	Jeffries	Richmond
Capps	Johnson, E. B.	Roybal-Allard
Capuano	Kaptur	Ruiz
Cardenas	Keating	Ruppersberger
Carson (IN)	Kelly (IL)	Ryan (OH)
Cartwright	Kennedy	Sánchez, Linda T.
Castor (FL)	Kildee	Sanchez, Loretta
Castro (TX)	Kilmer	Sarbanes
Chu	Kind	Schakowsky
Ciavilline	Kirkpatrick	Schiff
Clarke	Kuster	Schrader
Clay	Langevin	Schwartz
Cleaver	Larsen (WA)	Scott (VA)
Clyburn	Larson (CT)	Scott, David
Cohen	Lee (CA)	Serrano
Conyers	Levin	Sewell (AL)
Cooper	Lewis	Shea-Porter
Courtney	Lipinski	Sherman
Crowley	Loebsack	Sires
Cuellar	Lofgren	Slaughter
Cummings	Lowenthal	Smith (WA)
Davis (CA)	Lowey	Speier
Davis, Danny	Lujan Grisham (NM)	Swalwell (CA)
DeGette	Luján, Ben Ray (NM)	Takano
Delaney	Maloney,	Thompson (CA)
DeLauro	Carolyn	Thompson (MS)
DeBene	Maloney, Sean	Tierney
Deutch	Matheson	Titus
Dingell	Matsui	Tonko
Doggett	McCarthy (NY)	Tsongas
Doyle	McCollum	Van Hollen
Edwards	McDermott	Vargas
Ellison	McGovern	Veasey
Engel	McNerney	Vela
Enyart	Meeks	Velázquez
Eshoo	Meng	Visclosky
Esty	Michaud	Walz
Farr	Moore	Wasserman
Fattah	Moran	Schultz
Foster	Nadler	Waters
Frankel (FL)	Napolitano	Watt
Fudge	Neal	Waxman
Galleo	Negrete McLeod	Welch
Garamendi	Nolan	Wilson (FL)
Green, Al	O'Rourke	Yarmuth
Green, Gene		
Grijalva		

NOT VOTING—24

Barton	Grayson	Polis
Brady (TX)	Hensarling	Rush
Burgess	Johnson (GA)	Schneider
Conaway	Lynch	Schock
Connolly	Marchant	Sessions
Cramer	Markey	Stutzman
Flores	Miller, George	Williams
Granger	Nunnelee	Young (FL)

□ 1356

Ms. CASTOR of Florida and Mrs. NAPOLITANO changed their vote from “yea” to “nay.”

So the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF CLASSIFIED BRIEFING REGARDING SYRIA AND NORTH KOREA

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

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, today, the administration has confirmed that the Assad regime in Syria has crossed a dangerous, game-changing red line, using chemical weapons against its own citizens.

The Syrian conflict has raged for many months, and nearly 100,000 Syrian civilians have been killed. The conflict now threatens to spill over Syria's borders, destabilizing key American allies. This dangerous conflict threatens American national security interests in the region.

I wanted to take this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to urge Members to attend the classified briefing that the administration will be providing tomorrow morning at 9:30 a.m. in the CVC auditorium. Secretary of State Kerry, Deputy Secretary of Defense Ash Carter, Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Admiral Sandy Winnefeld, and Deputy Director of National Intelligence Robert Cardillo will be there to brief Members on the situations in both Syria and in North Korea.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to say to Members that we won't be having another vote in this series.

□ 1400

APPOINTMENT AS MEMBER OF HIT POLICY COMMITTEE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment, pursuant to section 13101 of the HITECH Act (Pub.L. 111-5), and the order of the House of January 3, 2013, of the following individual on the part of the House to the HIT Policy Committee:

Mrs. Gayle Harrell, Stuart, Florida

HOOR OF MEETING ON TOMORROW

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 10 a.m. tomorrow.

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

There was no objection.

REMOVAL OF NAMES OF MEMBERS AS COSPONSORS OF H.R. 1445

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that Representatives RUNYAN, GRIMM, LOBIONDO, and BISHOP of New York be removed as cosponsors of H.R. 1445.

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

There was no objection.

RESPONSIBLE HELIUM ADMINISTRATION AND STEWARDSHIP ACT

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill H.R. 527.

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

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 178 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 527.

The Chair appoints the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. YODER) to preside over the Committee of the Whole.

□ 1403

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 527) to amend the Helium Act to complete the privatization of the Federal helium reserve in a competitive market fashion that ensures stability in the helium markets while protecting the interests of American taxpayers, and for other purposes, with Mr. YODER in the chair.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

The gentleman from Washington (Mr. HASTINGS) and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT) each will control 30 minutes.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Today, I rise in support of H.R. 527. This bill is necessary to protect our economy from the impending helium shortage and to inject free-market principles into our Federal helium program.

The Federal Helium Reserve was first created after World War I, when we imagined a world where blimps would be the future of air travel and vital to our national security efforts. Although this effort took a different course, that didn't stop the Federal Government from spending money on this program and stockpiling helium continuously through the 1980s. By the 1990s, it became clear that the Reserve had a de-

clining usefulness and had racked up a \$1.3 billion debt.

In response, Congress in 1996 passed legislation to implement reforms to the program and require the sale and privatization of the Reserve by 2015, or when the debt was paid off, whichever came first.

However, since this original decision to close the Reserve, both the demand and uses for helium have dramatically changed. This has created a situation where the Reserve's debt will be paid off sooner than expected—nearly 2 years earlier—in October of this year. But, while the debt will have been paid off, there will still be helium in the Reserve. By law then, the current Federal helium program will end and the Bureau of Land Management, or BLM, will no longer have the authority to sell the remaining 11 billion cubic feet of helium. It's important to note, too, Mr. Chairman, that the Reserve contains half of our U.S. domestic supply and 30 percent of the world's helium supply.

If Congress fails to act before October, we will artificially drop the helium supply and cause a global helium shortage that will cost jobs and severely disrupt our economy. Despite what many think, helium is not just used for party balloons. It is essential to our 21st century economy. Without helium we wouldn't have lifesaving MRI machines, computer chips, fiber optic cables, or other devices used for defense needs.

The bill before us today is truly a bipartisan plan that I'm pleased to have worked on with the lead Democrat on the Natural Resources Committee, Mr. MARKEY from Massachusetts, as well as our other colleagues on the committee, Mr. FLORES of Texas and Mr. HOLT of New Jersey.

First, this bill would implement a new operating system for the Federal Helium Reserve over the next decade that would include semiannual auctions. This will ensure that we prevent a helium shortage and that the Reserve stays open until nearly all of the helium supply is sold.

□ 1410

Second, it will build on the reforms made in 1996 and inject more free market principles into the sales process to get a better and fairer return for American taxpayers.

Over the last decade, the Federal Government has been selling helium from the Reserve significantly below market price. As you can see from this chart—and this is based on BLM data—the new demands for helium have caused the market price to rise much higher than the Federal Government's pricing formula and much faster than BLM's ability to track market prices.

So, as a result, this has cost taxpayers tens of millions of dollars. This has been confirmed by reports and testimony from both the Government Accountability Office, the GAO, and the Department of the Interior Inspector

General. The big gap is right here. This is what we are selling it for, and this is what the market price is.

In addition, the current program restricts sales to only a few companies through an allotment system that is essentially an oligarchy for Federal helium. Nearly 100 percent of our helium supply is being put into the hands of four refiners that directly benefit from the low Federal pricing formula while other competitors are locked out. The current cheap price of helium gives an unfair market advantage to these handful of companies.

Implementing semiannual helium auctions will inject much-needed competition into the program and help establish a fair market price for helium. According to the CBO, this bill will bring in over \$340 million to the Treasury over the next 10 years. The bill also includes important reforms to increase transparency and to prevent supply disruptions.

Now, Mr. Chairman, over 20 groups representing the end users of refined helium—and these are high-tech manufacturers of semiconductors, aerospace technologies, medical devices, chemicals, fiber optics, and scientific research—all have called for the passage of this legislation. Although this bill enjoys broad bipartisan support, I do want to take a moment to directly address some concerns that have been raised throughout this legislative process.

First, doing nothing is not an option. While I recognize that many people don't believe that the Federal Government should be in the helium business—and I would agree—we must recognize the realities of our current situation. Helium is too essential to our economy to essentially cut off the valve at the Reserve. We need this bill to protect our economy from severe disruptions and to provide additional time for the new development of alternative domestic helium resources so that our country and economy are prepared for when the Reserve does close. However, this bill will make sure that we are building on the reforms of the 1996 act and that we are managing and selling the helium in a more responsible manner.

Second, maintaining the status quo is not an option. Under conditions in the current law, the entire program comes to an end this October. Simply authorizing the continuation of the current program does nothing to address the current issues with the Federal pricing formula and the need to implement free market reforms. We cannot keep selling helium to a handful of companies. Instead, we need an open helium market that encourages more bidders, more competition, and more accurate pricing in order to get the best return for the taxpayers.

What we need then, Mr. Chairman, is no more lucrative handouts, no more government picking winners. What we need is good ole American competition.