

control of the time passes to the Member who led the opposition to ordering the previous question. That Member, because he then controls the time, may offer an amendment to the rule, or yield for the purpose of amendment."

In Deschler's Procedure in the U.S. House of Representatives, the subchapter titled "Amending Special Rules" states: "a refusal to order the previous question on such a rule [a special rule reported from the Committee on Rules] opens the resolution to amendment and further debate." (Chapter 21, section 21.2) Section 21.3 continues: "Upon rejection of the motion for the previous question on a resolution reported from the Committee on Rules, control shifts to the Member leading the opposition to the previous question, who may offer a proper amendment or motion and who controls the time for debate thereon."

Clearly, the vote on the previous question on a rule does have substantive policy implications. It is one of the only available tools for those who oppose the Republican majority's agenda and allows those with alternative views the opportunity to offer an alternative plan.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on ordering the previous question.

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

Mr. POLIS. 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.

□ 1400

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. POE of Texas). Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later.

EXTENSION OF DIRECT SPENDING REDUCTION FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 25) to direct the Secretary of the Interior to convey certain Federal features of the electric distribution system to the South Utah Valley Electric Service District, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 25

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

SECTION 1. EXTENSION OF DIRECT SPENDING REDUCTION FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024.

Paragraph (6)(B) of section 251A of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control

Act of 1985 (2 U.S.C. 901a) is amended by striking "and for fiscal year 2023" and by inserting " , for fiscal year 2023, and for fiscal year 2024".

SEC. 2. INAPPLICABILITY OF REDUCED ANNUAL ADJUSTMENT OF RETIRED PAY FOR MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES UNDER THE AGE OF 62 UNDER THE BIPARTISAN BUDGET ACT OF 2013 WHO FIRST BECAME MEMBERS PRIOR TO JANUARY 1, 2014.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1401a(b)(4) of title 10, United States Code, as added by section 403(a) of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013 (Public Law 113-67) and amended by section 10001 of the Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2014 (Public Law 113-76), is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

"(G) MEMBERS COVERED.—This paragraph applies to a member or former member of an armed force who first became a member of a uniformed service on or after January 1, 2014."

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall take effect on December 1, 2015, immediately after the coming into effect of section 403 of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013 and the amendments made by that section.

SEC. 3. TRANSITIONAL FUND FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH RATE (SGR) REFORM.

Section 1898 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395iii) is amended—

(1) by amending the heading to read as follows: "TRANSITIONAL FUND FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH RATE (SGR) REFORM";

(2) by amending subsection (a) to read as follows:

"(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary shall establish under this title a Transitional Fund for Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) Reform (in this section referred to as the 'Fund') which shall be available to the Secretary to provide funds to pay for physicians' services under part B to supplement the conversion factor under section 1848(d) for 2017 if the conversion factor for 2017 is less than conversion factor for 2013."

(3) in subsection (b)(1), by striking "during—" and all that follows and inserting "during or after 2017, \$2,300,000,000."; and

(4) in subsection (b)(2), by striking "from the Federal" and all that follows and inserting "from the Federal Supplementary Medical Insurance Trust Fund."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FITZPATRICK) and the gentleman from Washington (Mr. SMITH) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, President Washington once said:

The willingness with which our young people are likely to serve in any war, no matter how justified, shall be directly proportional to how they perceive veterans of earlier wars were appreciated by our Nation.

There is no doubt that we appreciate the service and sacrifice of each generation of veterans, from our original veterans, patriots, to those who landed at Normandy during World War II, to present. We as Americans and as lawmakers are forever in debt to the dedication of our military men and women who bore the pain of battle, physically and emotionally.

While we stand here in this Chamber each day and pledge our allegiance to the American flag that they defend, while we are able to act as a democratic body freely elected by the people thanks to their sacrifices, sometimes simple appreciation isn't enough. We have a chance today to treat our veterans with the honor they deserve by ensuring that they are fully compensated for their service during retirement, while also addressing other concerns facing our Nation.

Today we will take up the legislation under consideration to ensure that all servicemen and -women who are enlisted prior to January 1 of this year will receive the full cost of living adjustments in retirement before and after the age of 62. Furthermore, this bill also ensures our seniors will have access to the health care services they depend on through Medicare.

For too long, the relationship between doctor and patient has been strained by the confusion and instability of a well-intentioned but unaddressed problem with the Medicare program itself, known as the sustainable growth rate or SGR. A component of this legislation works to ensure that seniors are able to receive the care they depend on from the physicians who know them, while also guaranteeing that those physicians are fairly compensated by Medicare through a fund until long-term reform of the SGR is achieved this spring. In doing so, this legislation provides much-needed stability for the medical community by ensuring that physicians have the predictability in billing they need to further their practice and to focus on their patients.

By taking up and passing this legislation in bipartisan fashion, we can address areas of critical concern, while working together to make sure we are also being fiscally responsible. This legislation provides a necessary offset that is in the same vein of the bipartisan budget agreement this Chamber passed just over a month ago.

The American people expect us to make the tough decisions that help them in their daily lives, be it a military veteran looking to secure his retirement after a lifetime of duty and commitment, to the senior making sure their next doctor's visit is free from any undue stress, or ensuring that physicians can further their passion of serving their community.

This legislation provides a path forward for our Nation and this body in addressing their concerns. I urge full bipartisan support of this legislation

and encourage the whole House to consider the important needs that the bill addresses.

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

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

There are a number of problems with this piece of legislation. One of the biggest ones is just the process of it. This has been dropped on us at the absolute last minute. In fact, on a bill that has profound impacts on the budget in a number of different areas, we just, moments ago, received a broad outline of a score of how it is going to impact that budget—moments ago. We did not have time to consider this legislation adequately to figure out what impact it was going to have on the budget, but there are a couple of things we do know about it that creates a major problem.

Yes, in the short-term, this pleases two constituency groups. It pleases veterans, and it pleases doctors by giving them the money that they want. But what was not mentioned in the speech talking about this bill in favor of it is how it is paid for. It is paid for by adding another year to sequestration.

Now, there are a couple of interesting things about this. First of all, that is 8 years from now. We have heard nothing but, from the other side of the aisle, about how government is spending too much money, about how the deficit and the debt are out of control, and yet here we have up-front money being spent on the promise that 8 years from now we will cover those costs. And what is worse, 8 years from now, the way we are going to cover those costs is through sequestration, across-the-board cuts that will cut other entitlement, other mandatory spending programs. So we are really simply robbing one group of deserving people to pay another group of deserving people. That is hardly responsible and hardly helpful.

There are a couple of other specific aspects of this that I want to mention from the Department of Defense standpoint, focusing now just on the portion that addresses the cost of living reduction.

I want to make sure we understand what exactly that cost of living reduction was. In the military, if you serve 20 years, you can retire at that point with your full pension, which is basically half of your pay at that point. This bill took, for those people between the ages of 42 and 62, working age, and reduced their COLA by 1 percent. It didn't reduce the pension. It reduced how much that pension would be increased by each year by 1 percent.

Now, I don't deny that that is a hit and a cost, but what is it offsetting?

The Pentagon has to pay this cost, or at least a portion of this cost. They have to pay—the old bill, and again, I am just getting the new score. But in the old bill, it was roughly \$700 million a year that DOD had to take out of

their operating budget and put in to paying for this pension. So, by doing this, we are taking roughly \$700 million a year out of the Pentagon budget.

What does that mean? What it means is a further blow to readiness. Now, Republican and Democratic members of the Armed Services Committee have rightly screamed that we are cutting readiness to the point where we are not training our forces to prepare to fight the fight that we ask them to fight.

Now, the gentleman made an excellent point that, basically, what is going to make people want to sign up for the military? And he mentioned making sure that we take care of our veterans. I certainly think that is an issue. And I will tell you, for the last 10 years we have increased the GI Bill. We have increased pay every single year. We have made dramatic increases in combat pay. I applaud this Chamber for the bipartisan way in which they have taken care of our military veterans. But one other major issue that is going to determine whether or not people want to join the military and stay in it is whether or not we train them and prepare them for the fight we are going to ask them to do. And what the consequences of this are going to be is it is another blow to that.

If you are a pilot, you will not have enough fuel or enough fixed equipment to train as often as you need to. If you are an infantryman, you will not have the bullets to practice as much as you need to. Doing this creates the one thing that everyone has said we don't want, and that is a hollow force, a force that exists but is not trained to fight the fight that we ask them to do.

In fact, there is a great and compelling story told by the chairman of the Armed Services Committee in an argument for why readiness is important, and that was the Korean war, and those were the troops that we sent over in the initial effort to stop the North Koreans. Those troops were not trained, and men died because they were not trained and they were not prepared for a battle that we sent them into.

So we are robbing one portion of the Pentagon budget to pay another, and I think we are robbing precisely the portion that we can least afford to rob. And I don't think there is anything noble about standing up and taking money away from the readiness that is going to train our troops to fight fights that we, as politicians, send them to fight.

Now, I will say, on the SGR fix and the doc fix, that is a short-term problem, and we need to deal with it. Step aside. I would be very, very happy to pay for that, and I support that very strongly.

I do not like the pay-for. Personally, I would be more than willing to raise taxes or cut spending in other places other than to, once again, go back to the sequester option and also to kick it out 8 years from now.

This is an irresponsible bill that approaches very, very real problems. But

make no mistake about it. You can stand up and talk about what you are paying for, whom you are giving the money to, but I do hope people will address whom you are taking the money from. You are taking the money from other recipients of mandatory spending by doing sequester again. And as importantly, you are taking the money away from the readiness accounts that will train our troops so that they are able to fight, so that we will hopefully not do the one thing that I think would be utterly unconscionable, and that is to send troops to a battle that we have not prepared them for.

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

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE), though she is in support of the bill.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I thank the gentleman, and I thank the manager of this legislation.

I thank our chairman, our ranking member of the Armed Services Committee, for his consistent diligence on acting on behalf of the men and women in the United States military, and certainly those who have already served.

I, for one, will associate myself with the disappointment of the offset that has been offered in this legislation. No one likes sequester.

I will add an additional point of contention is that this Nation is not broke. Economists have said over and over again that we are not broke. We can fully fund and should fund our military as it relates to preparedness. That is part of protecting the homeland, which I serve on the Homeland Security Committee.

□ 1415

Then of course we all have tried to deliberate on what we can do best for our doctors under what we call the SGR, or the doctor fix. Let me just say this as I rise to support this legislation, because I do come from Texas, and I do interact with veterans across the Nation and others.

As painful as the extending out of the sequester to 2024 was, I just want to offer this thought. First of all, as I have argued—and I hope maybe the light will come on that we are not broke, that we will rid ourselves of the sequester and begin to budget fully to provide investment in our people.

So, the reason for advocating is, as I go home every weekend, and throughout the week when I am in the district I will run into military personnel and/or veterans, to speak about the impact that this would have on them, their families. Certainly I believe that this was one that needs to be corrected, and I would like to see us working fairly across the board, that we find a way to respond to the high numbers that this costs, and as well to work with those with optional ideas. I hope before 2024

we have no sequester. As my good friend has indicated, it is a poor way of managing our budget.

Let me also say, because of the many low-income areas and the physicians that I have interacted with, who indicate how difficult it is to serve my low-income patients or my patients that are elderly, that the doctor fix is crucial for the 18th Congressional District in providing health care for those who are in need, particularly those who are elderly.

So, as we look askance at how this has been formulated—and I know that it is one that has come to us—but I would hope that we would do this fix this time, Mr. Speaker, and then work to undo the offset so that we can help seniors and doctors.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, so if the gentleman has no further speakers I will close.

I yield myself the balance of my time just really to drive home one point on the Armed Services' side of the equation, and that is the impact that personnel costs are having on the Department of Defense. They are an increasing, growing part of our defense budget in large part because we have been very, very generous with people who serve in the military in terms of pay, benefits, and retirement, but as everyone who serves on the Armed Services Committee knows, increasing personnel costs squeezes out other portions of the budget.

I have talked a lot about readiness. I think that is incredibly important, but also procurement, making sure that the men and women who serve in the military have the equipment that they need to fight the fight. We can have a great military where everyone is very well paid, the benefits go on forever, but they don't have the equipment or the training necessary to fight.

I will tell you, every single expert, right, left, middle, wherever, who studies this question, we just had four prominent think-tanks spanning that spectrum come out with a study on the future of the Department of Defense budget. Every single one of those experts has said that if we do nothing to rein in personnel costs, that is precisely the force that we will have; it will be hollow. It will not have the equipment, and it will not have the training to do what it is that we ask them to do.

Now, we may not think that the 1 percent cut that was done here in the COLA is the best way to go. I can entertain that argument. I certainly understand veterans who were promised this, who expect to receive it. If it is not that, what is it? What is on the table? All we have done in this Chamber is said no, no, no to every effort the Department of Defense has put out there to try to rein in this spending, to try to rein in this spending, as I said,

so that we can have a military that lives up to what we want it to live up to. This is a very, very real issue.

Once again, we are punting it and completely ignoring it, completely unaddressed by supporters of this bill. They are just addressing this narrow area, making the broader problem worse.

As I said in the beginning, also, once again, adding sequester back in the lexicon for another year. This is not a solution to any problem, other than a series of political ones. We have just too many difficult choices to make to simply rely on politics with every bill that we bring up here. We have got to make some hard choices. This bill doesn't do it. It punts once again in every conceivable way. It simply makes the problems worse.

I know it is not going to happen, but I would nonetheless urge this body to oppose this bill and make some responsible choices, actually make choices as to what to do with the budget instead of continually punting on every difficult decision that comes before us. I assure you, this will not be the last one by any stretch of the imagination.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, it is always responsible to keep promises made to our Nation's veterans. What is before the House today is an extension of current policy that was passed in overwhelming bipartisan fashion right here in this Chamber less than 2 months ago.

In addition, it does protect the promises that the Nation has made to our veterans. So, I encourage my colleagues to vote in favor of the bill, to care for those who have borne the battle, and to send that message to all who can hear it.

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, due to heavy snow in Oregon, and the associated cancellation of flights out of the State, I am unable to be present for the vote on S. 25. I plan to vote in favor of S. 25. I voted against the Murray-Ryan Budget that put in place the unacceptable cuts to military retirement cost of living adjustments (COLAs). These cuts would have reduced annual COLA for military retirees by 1 percent every year until the service member turns 62. This could be as much as an \$83,000 cut over the lifetime of a typical enlisted member who retires after 20 years of service. It is unconscionable that Congress would try to balance the budget on the backs of our military retirees, and I am glad that S. 25 prevents COLA cuts from going into place for all current military retirees and future retirees who are currently serving.

I am also pleased that S. 25 sets aside some funding for preventing Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) cuts to Medicare and TRICARE reimbursements for doctors. I voted against the creation of the faulty SGR formula in 1997 and have fought to fix it ever since. Unfortunately, instead of fixing the SGR Congress has delayed it year after year. This

means that if Congress fails to act by March of this year, doctors would face a cut of approximately 27% in their Medicare and TRICARE reimbursements. This is not acceptable. I am hopeful that Congress will use the funds set aside by S. 25 to help pay for a permanent fix to the SGR rather than another delay.

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, while I support the effort to fix the cut to veterans' pensions included in S. 25, I am staunchly opposed to extending sequestration cuts to Medicare. Given that the cut to veterans' pensions is due to occur many years before the sequestration extension, I am supporting this bill, with the hope that Congress will undo this additional extension of sequestration cuts to Medicare. Again, let me state clearly: I oppose extending sequestration cuts to Medicare, and I will be working to convince the Senate to find an alternative way to fund the fix to veterans' pensions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FITZPATRICK) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 25, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. 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 motion will be postponed.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on questions previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

Ordering the previous question on House Resolution 475;

Adopting House Resolution 475, if ordered; and

Suspending the rules and passing S. 25.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. Remaining electronic votes will be conducted as 5-minute votes.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3193, CONSUMER FINANCIAL FREEDOM AND WASHINGTON ACCOUNTABILITY ACT; PROVIDING FOR PROCEEDINGS DURING THE PERIOD FROM FEBRUARY 13, 2014, THROUGH FEBRUARY 24, 2014; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on ordering the previous question on the resolution (H. Res. 475) providing for consideration of the bill (3193) to amend the Consumer Financial Protection Act of 2010 to strengthen the review authority of the Financial Stability Oversight Council of regulations issued by