

some nations, however, are not playing by the rules.

Barriers to agriculture are the most pressing issue for my home State of Nebraska, but every industry is subjected to outdated tariffs and nonscientific barriers which countries fashion to protect their own domestic industries.

If the U.S. fails to lead, our exports will be placed at a competitive disadvantage to those from countries moving forward with aggressive trade agendas. To enhance U.S. leverage in the marketplace, we need to pass the Bipartisan Trade Priorities Act. By renewing this act, we would demonstrate seriousness about formulating enforceable, science-based rules and empower the rest of the world to follow suit.

WOMEN'S ECONOMIC AGENDA

(Mrs. CAPPS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, all you need to do is watch one episode of "Mad Men" to know that women in the workforce have come a long way. While we would like to say that everything is better now, we certainly know that is not the case.

On the central coast of California and across the United States, women continue to earn less than men for equal work. Child care costs more than college tuition. Access to earned paid family leave, maternity leave, and sick days is lagging. These are barriers for women, but they also have a ripple effect on their families and on our local economies.

We are not powerless to address this, and that is why I hosted an open community forum last week to explore the many ways that we can support an economy that works for women and families. That is why we need a vote on the Women's Economic Agenda, a slate of legislative proposals to strengthen the middle class and our local economies. Because we know that when women succeed, America succeeds.

NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER

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

Mr. PALAZZO. Mr. Speaker, this week, our Nation observes the 63rd National Day of Prayer. Leaders have been gathering in our Nation to recognize this day since Congress recognized it in 1952. We have always been and still remain a nation under God.

This week, I will continue to pray for our Nation. I will pray for my colleagues who serve with me here in Congress. I will pray for the people I serve in south Mississippi. I will pray that God Almighty continues to watch over our people and that he will continue to bless this land.

Also, my prayers and my thoughts are with all those in my home State of

Mississippi and throughout the country who were affected by this week's storms. I want to thank my colleagues who have reached out to my office and to our delegation.

This week, as we bow our heads once more to observe the National Day of Prayer, we also remember the 35 lives lost, the loved ones who mourn them, and the hundreds of communities who are picking up the pieces to rebuild their lives.

□ 1215

NOMINATION OF SHERYL LIPMAN

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

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, today, the House will consider the nomination by President Obama of Ms. Sheryl Lipman to be a district court judge in the Western District of Tennessee.

Yesterday, with less than 60 votes, cloture was lifted in the Senate.

Ms. Lipman will assuredly be confirmed by the Senate today. She is an outstanding jurist whom I recommended to the President. She was counsel to the University of Memphis, an esteemed attorney in private practice, and the executive director of Diversity Memphis, a group that brings people together. She was recommended by a bipartisan group of ad hoc lawyers in Memphis as the highest-qualified person seeking the position. She will serve the district well.

I commend President Obama for his nomination, and I thank Senators ALEXANDER and CORKER for their bipartisanship in voting for the lifting of cloture, voting for her today, and helping this nomination come about.

COMMEMORATION OF HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY

(Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise in honor of Yom Hashoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day, to pay respect to over 12 million people, including 6 million Jews, systematically murdered by the Nazis. We learn how ordinary men and women can turn a blind eye to massive suffering and death.

This January, I traveled to Poland to observe the 69th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz concentration camp. We were joined by representatives and parliamentarians from 60 different countries, over half of the Knesset from Israel, and many, many survivors.

The memory of the Holocaust is seared forever into the consciousness of a generation of people who survived it. Through their stories, the lessons of that dark time serve as a warning to future generations.

In the words of Elie Wiesel:

Human suffering anywhere concerns men and women everywhere.

It is with that sentiment I vow: never forget, and never again.

SEXUAL ASSAULT ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES

(Ms. KUSTER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. KUSTER. Mr. Speaker, it astonishes me that by the time women graduate from college, one in five will be a victim of sexual assault.

Colleges are institutions of higher learning, and no student—especially young women—should ever feel threatened on the campus that they call home for 4 years.

I applaud the President for announcing a series of efforts to strengthen Federal involvement and provide schools with the tools needed to end sexual assault on campuses. We must work across the aisle to put an end to this violence and to give victims the support they need.

The new Web site launched yesterday, notalone.gov, will do just that: increase transparency through annual surveys and information on the prevalence of sexual assault on campuses.

As a member of the third class of women ever to graduate from Dartmouth College, I was proud to see President Phil Hanlon step up to address unsafe and inappropriate behavior on the Dartmouth campus and to see the University of New Hampshire recognized for its initiatives to reduce sexual violence on campus.

We must continue to address these issues head-on and ensure a safe and secure environment for learning for all college students, men and women.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4486, MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND VETERANS AFFAIRS AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2015; AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4487, LEGISLATIVE BRANCH APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2015

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 557 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 557

Resolved, That at any time after adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 4486) making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2015, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member

of the Committee on Appropriations. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. Points of order against provisions in the bill for failure to comply with clause 2 of rule XXI are waived. During consideration of the bill for amendment, the chair of the Committee of the Whole may accord priority in recognition on the basis of whether the Member offering an amendment has caused it to be printed in the portion of the Congressional Record designated for that purpose in clause 8 of rule XVIII. Amendments so printed shall be considered as read. When the committee rises and reports the bill back to the House with a recommendation that the bill do pass, the previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 2. At any time after adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 4487) making appropriations for the Legislative Branch for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2015, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. The bill shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill for failure to comply with clause 2 of rule XXI are waived. No amendment to the bill shall be in order except those printed in the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. All points of order against such amendments are waived. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 3. Pending the adoption of a concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2015, the amounts provided for current law mandatory budget authority and outlays contained in the statement of the Chair of the Committee on the Budget of the House of Representatives in the Congressional Record dated April 29, 2014, shall be considered for all purposes in the House to be allocations to the Committee on Appropriations under section 302(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974.

SEC. 4. During consideration of H.R. 4486 and H.R. 4487 pursuant to this resolution, the suballocations printed in House Report 113-425 shall be considered for all purposes in the House to be suballocations under section 302(b) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. YODER). The gentleman from Oklahoma is recognized for 1 hour.

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

GENERAL LEAVE

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

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

There was no objection.

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, the Rules Committee met and reported a rule for consideration of the first two appropriations bills that the House will consider for fiscal year 2015: H.R. 4486, the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act; and H.R. 4487, the Legislative Branch Appropriations Act.

The resolution provides an open rule for consideration of H.R. 4486 so that all Members have the opportunity to come to the floor and offer amendments on this important piece of legislation.

The resolution also provides a structured rule for consideration of H.R. 4487, the Legislative Branch Appropriations Act, which is customarily considered in this manner. This structured rule makes in order eight amendments.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present to this House the first of what I hope are many appropriations bills for fiscal year 2015. Because of the Ryan-Murray budget agreement late last year, the Appropriations Committee has been able to move expeditiously and report these two bills for consideration by the whole House. In fact, this is the earliest that appropriations bills have been considered in this House since 1974.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, both of these bills enjoy strong bipartisan support. Both were reported out of committee by voice vote and take into account updated priorities for the coming fiscal year.

I am proud, for example, that we were able to provide additional funding for our veterans, who have given so much in service to our country. I am also proud that these bills maintain the fiscal discipline this country so desperately needs.

The MilCon-VA bill actually spends \$1.8 billion less than fiscal year 2014, and the Legislative Branch bill provides for level funding.

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend Chairman ROGERS for beginning this process in earnest, and look forward to consideration of additional appropriations measures at the appropriate time.

I urge support for the rule and the underlying legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I would like to thank my friend from Oklahoma for yielding me the customary 30 minutes for debate.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 4486, the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act for fiscal year 2015 provides for \$165 billion in appropriations for veterans programs, military construction projects, and other agencies and programs. H.R. 4487, the Legislative Branch Appropriations Act for fiscal year 2015, provides for \$3.3 billion for legislative branch activities.

Clearly, the parties working on this matter worked together, and we need more of that in this institution. This bipartisan effort brought Democrats and Republicans together to draft legislation that appropriates funds to military construction projects, improves quality of life for veterans and military families, and allows for the continued operation of the essential functions of our Nation's governing body.

Included within these measures is an increase of \$8.8 billion for veterans benefits programs, guaranteeing those who have dedicated themselves to defending our Nation will receive the benefits they earned.

I am very proud of the fact that Mike Sykes is sitting with me today, who is one of those veterans that is working in my office and prepared me for this particular day. I would like to thank him, TOM, and all of the people that work with us with reference to this particular part of the responsibilities that we have on the Rules Committee.

H.R. 4486 provides for significant reductions to Defense Department construction spending, which is in line with the President's fiscal 2015 request, but uses those savings to increase total funding for the Veterans Affairs Department by 7 percent.

This shift represents the growing awareness that as we wind down the costly wars that we have been engaged in for over a decade, we must now turn our full attention to supporting those who will bear the cost of those wars for decades to come.

□ 1230

Last week, I participated in a ceremony for World War II, Vietnam, and Korean war veterans where we were honoring a gentleman that has spent a large portion of his career in making sure that veterans receive their proper due.

It was telling to me that we had not done all that they anticipated that we could, and, therefore, I am hopeful that we will take cognizance of the fact that the veterans coming home from Iraq and Afghanistan will have tremendous needs, and, hopefully, this small advance will allow for us to attend them properly.

The Department of Veterans Affairs is provided a total of \$158.2 billion in budget authority, an increase of almost 7 percent over last year. This legislation ensures full funding for essential VA compensation and benefits programs in areas like education, vocational training, and housing assistance.

This measure also includes \$58.7 billion in advance funding for the VA, ensuring that veterans will continue to have full access to their medical care needs, regardless of where Congress stands in the annual appropriations process.

The underlying legislation includes funding for important national programs and activities, such as the Medical and Prosthetic Research account, Post-9/11 GI Bill authorities, and encouragement for the department to maximize the availability of mental health services to veteran victims of sexual trauma while serving in the military.

H.R. 4487, the Legislative Branch Appropriations bill, while a bipartisan effort—and for the most part, non-controversial—still falls short of restoring funding levels for Member offices and committee staffs.

As with their fixation on cutting spending on any investment in our Nation's infrastructure, education, and scientific research, my friends on the Republican side continue to believe that you can reduce the budget indefinitely and still get the same product.

What they fail to acknowledge is that, eventually, there comes a breaking point where the lack of investment produces tangible reductions in the quality of the product rendered, and unfortunately, that time is fast approaching for Members' offices and committee staffs.

Two reports mentioned by the minority members on the Legislative Branch Subcommittee bring into stark relief the consequences of ongoing funding shortfalls.

The first, by the Congressional Management Foundation and the Society for Human Resource Management, shows that over 50 percent of congressional staff cite salaries as a major factor in their decision to leave their positions.

The second, by the Congressional Research Service, found that, between 1977 and 2010, House committee staff levels dropped by 28 percent, while Senate committee staff levels have increased by almost 15 percent over the same time.

Either the Senate is doing a lot more work than we are, or we are seriously hamstringing our ability to conduct thorough research and debate on the critical issues before us today.

We cannot continue to decimate our staffs and committees, while asking for more and more from them. As we must be responsible stewards of the resources that the American people have entrusted us with, so too must we be responsible to those who have chosen public service.

Just as we cannot continue to allow companies to pay nonliving wages, we cannot continue to pay our staffs in the same manner that we have. We can and must do better.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by thanking my good friend for putting an emphasis and a spotlight on an area of bipartisan cooperation in the veterans area. He is precisely right in the concern that both sides of the aisle have for the men and women in uniform that have fought this Nation's battles.

While the wars themselves have been contentious, I actually don't think the funding of veterans has ever been contentious, regardless of who was President and regardless of who was in control of this Chamber.

Quite frankly, as I recall, during the Bush years, we increased veterans expenditures by about 100 percent over an 8-year period. That has continued under President Obama.

Again, you can never do enough, but I think the Congress actually, over an extended period, has really tried in this area and has worked together quite well in a bipartisan sense.

My friend also referred a little bit to the legislative branch, and there, again, we probably have some areas of agreement, maybe some areas of disagreement, but not profound ones.

The reality is we are in a difficult time financially. My friend is absolutely correct when he points to some of the reductions in House expenditures. We have reduced, by about 14 percent, House expenditures over the last 3 or 4 years.

I would suggest, while those changes have been difficult, they have been appropriate, given the size of the deficit and the fiscal difficulties we had.

It is important to note, in this budget, we make no further reductions. As a matter of fact, we actually increase expenditures in some important institutions that actually support Congress and its work.

We have not done it again, as my friend has correctly stated, for Members' offices or for committees. We did do a little bit of that last year in raising so-called MRAs and committee budgets.

This year, because of the allocation we had, frankly, I have chosen, as chairman of that committee, to focus on things like the Government Accountability Office, the Government Printing Office, the Capitol Police, the Congressional Budget Office, areas that are absolutely indispensable in the operation of this institution. The Library of Congress, another one where the Congressional Research Service is housed, again, is very important to what we do.

Hopefully, as we go forward, we will be able to do more in some of these areas, but I think, given what we had, we have done reasonably well; and again, while these have been tough decisions, they have been made in a bipartisan manner with the cooperation between majority and minority on the appropriate Legislative Branch Subcommittee.

Finally, my friend did point to the Senate, and I suppose we always have a little bit of envy of the other body in

terms of its funding. I would suggest, while their expenditures have gone up, they have not been particularly dynamic in their legislative performance.

Frankly, far be it from me to offer a definitive opinion. We normally let each institution do what they want to do, but I am always happy for the contrast in the budget of a Republican House and a Democratic Senate because I think it is abundantly clear which one is serious about fiscal responsibility and which one is not, and I suspect we will have that debate going forward.

Again, I thank my friend for his remarks and his focus on what is genuinely important, and I know, when he talks about this institution and its staff and its functions, he does so with genuine respect and genuine concern.

Again, some of those concerns, I certainly share, and perhaps, going forward, as we did last year and we tried to do in some of the supportive institutions this year, we can restore some of that capability that I know he and I would both like to see us have.

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

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased at this time to yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. MORAN), the ranking member of the Appropriations Subcommittee on the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies.

Mr. MORAN is leaving us after this session, and he will be sorely missed, but he takes it upon himself to address an issue that is of vital concern to all Members of the House of Representatives.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my very good friend, Judge HASTINGS of Florida. Thank you very much for your service to this country, Judge.

Mr. Speaker, my comments, although critical, will be in no way personally critical of my very good friend from Oklahoma with whom I serve on the Appropriations Committee. He knows my very high regard for his integrity, his judgment, his character; and I value our friendship.

I rise in opposition to this rule, not the Military Construction-Veterans part—because that is an open rule, that is not at issue—but with regard to the Legislative Branch.

There are several amendments that should not have been made in order, should not, in my view, have even been taken seriously, but the reason I oppose it is particularly because there was an amendment that was not made in order that should be discussed on the floor of this House.

I offered an amendment, a very modest one, to provide \$25 a day to the Members in the form of a housing allowance for the days that we are in session—only the days we are in session. Now, we have been in session an average of 112 days per year recently, so that would have come out, not coincidentally, to exactly what our salaries would have been raised by, had there

not been a freeze included in this Legislative Branch Appropriations bill.

Frankly, it is an incentive for the Congress to be in session more days, but it is far more important than that. It would also have only applied to people who live more than 50 miles from Capitol Hill. I live 10 miles. In fact, it would not apply to any of us directly anyway because we can't raise our own salaries. It would only apply to future Congresses.

That is what this amendment is about. It is about the composition of this Congress, this institution, in the future, and that is why it is important.

I know it is not going to be popular among our constituents. When the word got out I suggested it in Mr. COLE's subcommittee and on full committee, we got hundreds of calls, all of them negative, most of them profane; but that doesn't mean that it is an issue that should not be discussed on the House floor.

We have denied pay increases to ourselves 11 times since I came into the Congress. There was a deal made a couple decades ago that said, if you don't receive money from speeches and honoraria, in return, the Congress will simply increase its pay by the cost of living each year, so it will be less politicized.

But what we did not only eliminated those outside sources of income, but we have in fact, politicized the issue by freezing our pay consistently. In fact, over the last 5 years, we have frozen our pay. This will be the sixth year in a row, and it is creating a serious problem, a problem that is only going to be exacerbated in the future.

I know the opinion of our constituents, but one of the things they may not be aware of is that the District of Columbia has one of the highest rental costs in the Nation. It is about \$27,000 a year right now for a very modest rental apartment, and it goes up each year.

At the same time, since I came into the Congress, congressional pay has gone down by one-fifth. We are paying ourselves one-fifth less than we were in 1992, so it is very difficult for many Members to afford to live here.

This is the first time that this pay freeze has been included in a Legislative Branch appropriations bill. It sets a precedent, and it is a precedent that is going to be very difficult to reverse. I don't think either party is going to take it upon themselves to try to change this. It is going to become obligatory in each successive Legislative Branch appropriations bill.

So I suspect, 5, 10, 15 years from now, it is still going to be the same; and what is the result of that?

Well, it means that the Congress is probably going to be composed of two types of Members. One will be those Members who come in for one, two, three terms and then, frankly, cash out, go into the private sector, take advantage of that experience, albeit limited, in the Congress, and then provide well for their families.

□ 1245

The second class of Member is likely to be those who are independently wealthy, who, in fact, as some do, could afford to give back their salaries because they don't need it.

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

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentleman from Virginia.

Mr. MORAN. I thank the Member.

So what does that mean? It means those people who are in their thirties, and early forties, who have young families, who, in fact, have home mortgages, who have unpaid student loans, who are small business owners, they are all going to be less likely to represent our constituencies who are most represented by those folks who have difficulty meeting their costs day after day.

I think this is very dangerous. It is a dangerous precedent. We should be able to discuss it. And that is all we ask for. I didn't expect a positive vote, but I expected a discussion of a very important issue as to how this Congress is going to be represented in the future.

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

First, I want to begin by extending the same regard and personal affection to my friend that he was kind enough to display toward me. I have had the privilege of serving with him on the Appropriations Committee, obviously, ever since I arrived at that committee; and we currently serve on the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee together, the Legislative Branch Subcommittee together, and Interior Subcommittee together. And on that committee, Interior, of course he was an absolutely superb chairman. I happen to think he is an even better ranking member. But he was a superb chairman, and we have worked together on many items. And I, like my friend from Florida, am going to miss my friend from Virginia, who I think has rendered distinguished service in this Chamber, and certainly to our committee.

In terms of his suggested amendment, I will make two points. First, we are advised this is a clause 2 violation to be legislating on an appropriations bill; and I thought there was a reasonable chance, secondly, that we would have a chance to discuss this and he would have a chance to make his point.

And I am glad that the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. MORAN) did make the point that he made because I think it is a very important point to be made. I particularly share your concerns about the long-term character of the body, and I think those were well stated. I don't think we are in any danger right now of reaching that point, but I think my friend does point out a trend that could occur.

I would also be quick to add, there are about as many different styles of Members as there are Members themselves. Some people come here with the

idea of being here for a long time. Other people come here for shorter periods of time, not with the idea of cashing out, but because they believe that is the appropriate way to serve.

In my State, my good friend Senator COBURN has always lived by term limits. He did when he was in this Chamber. He has, again, in the Senate. So not every Member that comes here and serves 6 or 8 years is trying to cash out. They just think that is the appropriate length of time, and that is a judgment that is quite often shared by their constituents. And again, I think either one is appropriate. I think Members and districts make that decision for themselves.

But I also think, in consideration of the decisions we have made in the last several years—by both parties, by the way. Again, my friends, when they were in the majority, had some concerns about increases in salaries as well, and I think that was because they saw the fiscal problems of the country.

We have had to make some tough decisions around here in the last few years. We are going to have to make, I think, some more tough decisions. And I think sometimes, to add legitimacy to those decisions, you have to lead by example. I think that is what we have tried to do. I think that is what my friends tried to do as well during the period that they were in the majority. So as long as we are preaching fiscal austerity, we have got to practice a little fiscal austerity.

But I want to conclude by saying, I still think my friend's point is a very important one to be heard. I am glad he made the remarks that he did and has raised it.

I am sorry for your staff because I am sure the incoming mail and calls have been extraordinary.

But again, one of the things I like about my friend, even when I disagree with him—because on occasion, we do—he is never afraid to articulate a position and present a point of view. And if there is a little fire associated with that, so much the better. I think he enjoys the give-and-take of that. And that is one of the things I am going to miss the most about him when he departs this Chamber.

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

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, before yielding to the next speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds.

Mr. Speaker, just in response to my friend from Oklahoma, what Mr. MORAN pointed to was the fact that moderate rent in this metropolitan area is \$27,000 a year. I don't think it is unreasonable for us to not only have a discussion, but to do something about the fact that there are Members that are here that can't afford that on the salary that they make. Now, it may be that the constituency is unsympathetic. It may be that these are tough times.

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

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. I yield myself an additional 30 seconds.

It may be that these are tough times, but the simple fact of the matter is we have at least 20 Members of the House of Representatives living in their offices, and I don't think that that is right. And I think that the public needs to know that, and I think once the public understands that a lot of that is attributed not only to that Member's idea about how to serve, but the fact that he or she cannot serve in a proper manner living in accommodations that I think they deserve by getting to this high station.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentlewoman from California (Ms. HAHN), a member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

Ms. HAHN. I thank my friend from Florida.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank Chairman CULBERSON and Ranking Member BISHOP for working with me to include two much-needed provisions in this Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations report. This bill makes important steps in fulfilling the promise that we have made to our veterans by providing job search assistance and offering homeless assistance to veterans displaced by domestic violence.

The unemployment rate for veterans is 9 percent compared to 6.7 percent nationwide, and it is even higher for women veterans. The unemployment rate for our women veterans is 9.6 percent. And after fighting for this country, we should ensure that they have a job and a place to live.

Veterans have skills our businesses need, and the VA should assist in matching potential employers with job-seeking veterans. My provision will encourage the VA and the Department of Labor to create a job placement service.

Also, I am very pleased that the chairman included language covering veterans displaced by domestic violence. Due to an oversight in our current law, the legal definition of "homeless veteran" differs significantly from the standard civilian definition of "homeless person." This means veterans fleeing from domestic violence could be excluded from receiving the benefits available to other homeless veterans.

The language included updates the definition of "homeless veteran" to bring it into line with the rest of the law. This meaningful change to this policy will make a large difference in the lives of veterans, particularly women veterans, displaced from their home due to domestic violence. In addition, this change is supported by several veterans organizations, such as the VFW, AMVETS, and the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans.

Mr. Speaker, both of these provisions represent a real step forward for fulfilling the promise to our Nation's veterans. And while sometimes we discuss

our own living situation here, what is really important today is making sure that our veterans are housed with dignity and respect.

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

I want to thank my friend from California for working so closely with Chairman CULBERSON and Ranking Member BISHOP on what is a genuinely important contribution to the legislation; and I think, frankly, it is pretty exemplary of the manner in which Chairman CULBERSON and Ranking Member BISHOP worked together throughout this process. I saw it myself during our full committee markup where, literally, they were working together to make changes to try and respond to Members' legitimate concerns in this area and did it right to the last minute of the bill.

So I know we are going to have contentious moments in the appropriations process; we always do as we go forward. But in this particular case, in this legislation, and certainly between the chairman and ranking member, I think we have an example of how to work together in a bipartisan fashion that most Americans, if they had a chance to learn about it, would be genuinely pleased with.

So again, I thank my friend from California for participating outside the committee in that. I think she made a very valuable contribution, and I am pleased that she made that point. And again, I recognize the wonderful work of Mr. CULBERSON and Mr. BISHOP.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased at this time to yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT), my good friend.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend, Judge HASTINGS, for his friendship, his consideration, and his assistance during my time here in Congress. And I am pleased to recognize the very fine Member, my good friend, Representative COLE from Oklahoma.

I will speak later, at another time, about the appropriations bill on the legislative branch. I now want to speak in support of the Military Construction, VA and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

For 4 years in a row, the Appropriations Committee has placed in the bill an additional \$20 million for suicide prevention and mental health outreach services. Several people have made this possible, starting with my New Jersey colleague, Representative RUNYAN, who has worked with me very closely and in a very bipartisan way on this issue over the last 4 years. I want to thank the subcommittee chair, Representative CULBERSON, and Ranking Member BISHOP for their steady support of our efforts; and of course to the full committee leaders, Chairman ROGERS and Ranking Member LOWEY, for their support.

Since 2012, the committee has increased funding for suicide prevention

and outreach by \$120 million overall at the request of Representative RUNYAN and me and other Members who have joined us in this effort, but our work on this issue is far from over.

Last week, The Washington Post reported that, while the suicide rates for our Active Duty force have come down in recent years, we have actually seen a tragic increase in suicide rates among our Guard and Reserve and veterans. The Department of Veterans Affairs' own statistics show that suicides among veterans have risen from an average of 18 per day in 2007 to about 22 per day, each one a tragedy. And I fear that the number may be even higher than is recorded.

I have no doubt that this committee and every Member of this body is committed to reversing this tragic trend, and these additional funds will certainly help. I believe that Congress must now give greater attention to the question of why we are seeing a difference emerging in the suicide rates between our Active Duty force, on the one hand, and our Guard and the Reserve and veterans population, on the other.

While this bill will be the last VA appropriations bill on which I work in Congress, I know that other Members who share my concern will carry on this work, and for that, I am grateful.

I hope that Congress will authorize a regular permanent increase in funding for mental health and suicide prevention so that these annual appeals for appropriations will not be necessary in the future.

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

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. I yield the gentleman from New Jersey an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. HOLT. Finally, I would say to anyone who is listening—my colleagues and the public alike—if they know a current or former servicemember who may be in need of help, Vets4Warriors, which is the Defense Department's New Jersey-based peer-to-peer counseling program, can help. The phone number is 1-855-VET-TALK. Calls are free, answered 24 hours a day, staffed by former servicemembers. It is the best lifeline we can offer.

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

I want to begin by thanking my friend from New Jersey and again recognize his very special and very distinguished service in this body. This is a typical example of the good sense and the compassion he brings to the floor on a regular basis, and I know I appreciate that. And while we are in different parties, he is one of the people, like my friend from Virginia (Mr. MORAN) who spoke earlier, that I most admire and I think is generally admired on both sides of the aisle. So I associate myself with the remarks he made and appreciate that very, very much, and I wish him well in whatever he chooses to do next because he has certainly distinguished himself here, as

he had in his academic career before he came here. And whatever he does next, I know he will be equally distinguished in that field, but we will miss him very much in this body.

And with that, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, if we defeat the previous question, I will offer an amendment to the rule to bring up H.R. 1010, our bill to raise the Federal minimum wage to \$10.10 an hour.

□ 1300

I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) to discuss the importance of raising the minimum wage.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Florida for yielding time to debate the rule.

Pop quiz. There is a piece of legislation that will give more than 25 million Americans a pay raise, bring nearly 1 million Americans out of poverty, and lower total food stamp aid by \$4.6 billion.

What do you do? What do you do? If you are the House Republican majority, you schedule a vote for H.R. 627, the National Park Service 100th Anniversary Commemorative Coin Act, and not legislation that accomplishes the items I just mentioned by raising the minimum wage.

What is it going to take for my Republican colleagues to do something that will actually help the economy? They came into the majority after the 2010 midterm elections saying that priorities one, two, and three were jobs, jobs, jobs. But this body hasn't seen anything substantive that would show that to be the truth.

Since 2011, the House Republicans forced the shutdown of the government, threatened the full faith and credit of the United States, and developed an obsession with repealing the Affordable Care Act. They have done nothing to help the American people.

No American working full-time should live in poverty. Raising the minimum wage will increase the take-home pay for more than 28 million Americans. It will add \$35 billion to the economy and higher wages through 2016. It will create 85,000 new jobs as a result of the increased economic activity.

But make no mistake. Those statistics are not likely to change their minds. No facts likely will because their refusal to give millions of Americans a raise is not about facts or economics; it is about keeping their sugar donors happy—sugar donors like the Koch brothers and Sheldon Adelson.

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

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. TAKANO. And while these sugar donors are throwing 10s of millions of dollars away on campaign ads in select toss-up districts, regular, hardworking Americans are struggling just to keep their heads above water.

For our country to move forward and continue to grow, we must do more for those who need help. President Franklin Roosevelt once said:

The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much, it is whether we provide enough for those who have little.

To provide enough, we must raise the minimum wage.

I urge my colleagues to vote “no” on the previous question so we can bring the minimum wage bill to the floor and get to work growing our economy and helping working families.

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

Mr. Speaker, while I appreciate what my friend from California had to say, the reality is this legislation doesn't have anything to do with the minimum wage, and frankly, it would be inappropriate to consider the minimum wage here. It would be legislating on an appropriations bill, something that as a rule we do not do around here.

Second, while not wishing to engage in a long debate about the minimum wage, I will say this. Remember, the people of this country and the people of individual States have the opportunity to move on this issue when they choose. Indeed, 19 States, if I recall correctly, actually have minimum wages above the Federal minimum wage.

There is serious concern that the one-size-fits-all minimum wage doesn't make a lot of sense. I can tell my friend I don't pretend to be an expert on what the cost of living in California or New York is, but I am sure it is considerably higher than it is in the State of Oklahoma, and at the end of the day, I actually trust the Oklahoma Legislature, the Oklahoma Governor, and the Oklahoma electorate to make this decision for themselves. I don't think imposing a national solution or national standard in this case is necessary or desirable.

So, again, I think you leave this to the wisdom of the States and localities. I think that is what our Founders generally envisioned we should do when we had questions of this nature.

Again, I am sure we will have this debate another time and on other occasions. It is a perfectly appropriate debate to have. It is not an appropriate debate, it would not be something we could do legislatively on this particular rule or the underlying legislation. So it seems to me not a strong reason to vote against either one because this vehicle could not carry the legislation that my friend from California would like to see enacted.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I would advise my friend from Oklahoma that I am the last speaker, and I am prepared to close if he is prepared to close.

Mr. COLE. I am prepared to close whenever my friend is.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Thank you very kindly.

Mr. Speaker, it has been one of our more syrupy debates around here, and it is because of the bipartisan nature that allowed for this legislation to come to the Rules Committee and then to be put here on the floor.

Mr. Speaker, I am happy to say that we can be pleased by the level of support provided in this legislation for essential veterans programs. America's veterans deserve the very best support our Nation has to offer, and I am pleased to note that Democrats and Republicans came together to craft legislation that provides the necessary resources for veterans and their families.

At the same time, though, we must realize that if we continue to strangle the support for the offices that are tasked with creating the legislation and programs to support those very veterans, we will eventually begin to fail them, as well.

We must break free from the false logic that all spending is bad spending and realize that investments in our country, our infrastructure, our education, our medical research, or even our legislature is a sound one.

Mr. Speaker, if we defeat the previous question, I am going to offer an amendment to the rule to bring up H.R. 1010, our bill to raise the Federal minimum wage to \$10.10 an hour. And while my friend from Oklahoma makes very salient commentary regarding what might very well be a view of some note in our body politic, I don't deem it unwise or unnecessary to talk about lifting people out of poverty at any time during the course of our legislative business, understanding the rules and the fact that this would not have been a rule germane to the specific issue.

But it is germane to the families out there in America. It is germane to the people that are working and are still in poverty that may be lifted out of poverty if we were to have a \$10.10-an-hour minimum wage.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to insert the text of the amendment in the RECORD along with extraneous material immediately prior to the vote on the previous question.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote “no” and defeat the previous question, and I now yield back the balance of my time.

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

In closing, I would like to say that one of the basic functions of Congress is to fund the government, and this rule would begin the process for consideration for fiscal year 2015 of actually doing that function and doing it in an orderly way and appropriate way.

I am particularly pleased that the appropriations process has moved as well and as quickly as it has so far this year. To that, I give credit to my

friend, Chairman ROGERS, and my great friend, Ranking Member LOWEY. They have worked well in a bipartisan manner.

I want to also commend the chairman of the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Subcommittee. Mr. BISHOP is the ranking member, and Mr. CULBERSON is the chairman. I think they have done a wonderful job.

Frankly, I have had the opportunity to work with my good friend DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ in the legislative branch as the ranking member, and I am currently privileged to be the chairman. I think that has been a very productive relationship. I have no doubt we are going to have some contention in other bills, but these bills have really moved together in a bipartisan fashion, and I think given the allocations that we had, have been worked through in a very professional, workmanlike way.

Now, my friend from Florida did mention the syrupy debate, and I know that is not his style. I have had the privilege of serving with him on the Rules Committee not just in this Congress but in a previous Congress, and he is one of the best debaters on the floor, and I have no doubt on every occasion I have seen he always gives as good as he gets and makes his case quite well. But I have appreciated having the opportunity to have this exchange with him. Obviously, I would urge that my colleagues actually support the rule and the underlying legislation.

While the rule vote is a procedural vote, and it is not uncommon for us to basically have a partisan division, I suspect that when the underlying legislation actually reaches this floor on the MilCon bill, the VA bill, and on the legislative branch bill, we will have a great deal of bipartisanship. Certainly, I look forward to that vote. I look forward to the debate and discussion over those. But the first thing we have to do is pass the rule, so, again, I urge my colleagues to pass this.

The material previously referred to by Mr. HASTINGS of Florida is as follows:

AN AMENDMENT TO H. RES. 557 OFFERED BY
MR. HASTINGS OF FLORIDA

At the end of the resolution, add the following new sections:

SEC. 5. Immediately upon adoption of this resolution the Speaker shall, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1010) to provide for an increase in the Federal minimum wage. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Education and the Workforce. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. All points of order against provisions in the bill are waived. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and re-

port the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions. If the Committee of the Whole rises and reports that it has come to no resolution on the bill, then on the next legislative day the House shall, immediately after the third daily order of business under clause 1 of rule XIV, resolve into the Committee of the Whole for further consideration of the bill.

SEC. 6. Clause 1(c) of rule XIX shall not apply to the consideration of H.R. 1010.

THE VOTE ON THE PREVIOUS QUESTION: WHAT IT REALLY MEANS

This vote, the vote on whether to order the previous question on a special rule, is not merely a procedural vote. A vote against ordering the previous question is a vote against the Republican majority agenda and a vote to allow the Democratic minority to offer an alternative plan. It is a vote about what the House should be debating.

Mr. Clarence Cannon's Precedents of the House of Representatives (VI, 308-311), describes the vote on the previous question on the rule as "a motion to direct or control the consideration of the subject before the House being made by the Member in charge." To defeat the previous question is to give the opposition a chance to decide the subject before the House. Cannon cites the Speaker's ruling of January 13, 1920, to the effect that "the refusal of the House to sustain the demand for the previous question passes the control of the resolution to the opposition" in order to offer an amendment. On March 15, 1909, a member of the majority party offered a rule resolution. The House defeated the previous question and a member of the opposition rose to a parliamentary inquiry, asking who was entitled to recognition. Speaker Joseph G. Cannon (R-Illinois) said: "The previous question having been refused, the gentleman from New York, Mr. Fitzgerald, who had asked the gentleman to yield to him for an amendment, is entitled to the first recognition."

The Republican majority may say "the vote on the previous question is simply a vote on whether to proceed to an immediate vote on adopting the resolution . . . [and] has no substantive legislative or policy implications whatsoever." But that is not what they have always said. Listen to the Republican Leadership Manual on the Legislative Process in the United States House of Representatives, (6th edition, page 135). Here's how the Republicans describe the previous question vote in their own manual: "Although it is generally not possible to amend the rule because the majority Member controlling the time will not yield for the purpose of offering an amendment, the same result may be achieved by voting down the previous question on the rule . . . When the motion for the previous question is defeated, 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 Mem-

ber 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. COLE. 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. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 9 of rule XX, the Chair will reduce to 5 minutes the minimum time for any electronic vote on the question of adoption of the resolution.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 227, nays 189, not voting 15, as follows:

[Roll No. 184]

YEAS—227

Aderholt	Farenthold	Kline
Amash	Fincher	Labrador
Amodel	Fitzpatrick	LaMalfa
Bachmann	Fleischmann	Lamborn
Bachus	Fleming	Lance
Barletta	Flores	Lankford
Barr	Forbes	Latham
Barton	Fortenberry	Latta
Benishek	Fox	LoBiondo
Bentivolio	Franks (AZ)	Long
Bilirakis	Frelinghuysen	Lucas
Bishop (UT)	Gardner	Luetkemeyer
Black	Garrett	Lummis
Blackburn	Gerlach	Marchant
Boustany	Gibbs	Marino
Brady (TX)	Gibson	Masse
Bridenstine	Gingrey (GA)	McAllister
Brooks (AL)	Gohmert	McCarthy (CA)
Brooks (IN)	Goodlatte	McCaul
Broun (GA)	Gosar	McClintock
Buchanan	Gowdy	McHenry
Bucshon	Granger	McKeon
Burgess	Graves (GA)	McKinley
Byrne	Graves (MO)	McMorris
Calvert	Griffin (AR)	Rodgers
Camp	Griffith (VA)	Meadows
Campbell	Grimm	Meehan
Cantor	Guthrie	Messer
Capito	Hall	Mica
Carter	Hanna	Miller (FL)
Cassidy	Harris	Miller (MI)
Chabot	Hartzler	Miller, Gary
Chaffetz	Hastings (WA)	Mullin
Coble	Heck (NV)	Mulvaney
Coffman	Hensarling	Murphy (PA)
Cole	Herrera Beutler	Neugebauer
Collins (GA)	Holding	Noem
Collins (NY)	Hudson	Nugent
Conaway	Huelskamp	Nunes
Cook	Huizenga (MI)	Olson
Cotton	Hultgren	Palazzo
Cramer	Hunter	Paulsen
Crawford	Hurt	Pearce
Crenshaw	Issa	Perry
Culberson	Jenkins	Pittenger
Daines	Johnson (OH)	Pitts
Davis, Rodney	Johnson, Sam	Poe (TX)
Denham	Jolly	Pompeo
Dent	Jones	Posey
DeSantis	Jordan	Price (GA)
DesJarlais	Joyce	Reed
Diaz-Balart	Kelly (PA)	Reichert
Duffy	King (IA)	Renacci
Duncan (SC)	King (NY)	Ribble
Duncan (TN)	Kingston	Rice (SC)
Ellmers	Kinzinger (IL)	Rigell

Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rokita
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Royce
Runyan
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schock
Schweikert
Scott, Austin

Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Southernland
Stewart
Stivers
Stutzman
Terry
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Turner
Upton

Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walorski
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IN)

□ 1339

Messrs. MORAN, HIMES, TAKANO, and BARBER changed their vote from “yea” to “nay.”

So the previous question was ordered. The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

Stated against:

Mr. NOLAN. Mr. Speaker, had I been present and voting on rollcall vote No. 184 (Motion on Ordering the Previous Question on the Rule providing for consideration of H.R. 4486) I would have voted “no.”

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 184 I was at a funeral in my district. Had I been present, I would have voted “no.”

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

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 3344

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to remove my name as a cosponsor from H.R. 3344.

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

There was no objection.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND VETERANS AFFAIRS AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2015

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CULBERSON. 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 consideration of H.R. 4486, and that I may include tabular material on the same.

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

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 557 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. 4486.

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

□ 1343

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. 4486) making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2015, and for other purposes, with Mr. WEBSTER of Florida in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

The gentleman from Texas (Mr. CULBERSON) and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BISHOP) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

It is a real honor and a privilege for me to present the Veterans Affairs and Military Construction Appropriations bill to the House of Representatives with my good friend from Georgia, SANFORD BISHOP.

This is a bipartisan bill that we produced together with unanimous support of the committee and the subcommittee to ensure that our veterans and our men and women in uniform have everything that they need to do their job with complete peace of mind.

In fact, I often think of the job of this subcommittee as the peace of mind subcommittee, to be sure that our men and women in uniform have everything they need when it comes to their physical infrastructure and that, when they leave the services and go into the VA system, they have everything they need.

□ 1345

Making sure that our men and women in uniform have everything that they need and making sure that our veterans when they leave the service have the best possible medical care this country can provide is one of those fundamental functions of the government. We have an obligation as guardians of the Treasury and as good stewards of taxpayers' hard-earned dollars to ensure that this vital, core function of our Federal Government is fulfilled to our veterans and to our men and women in uniform.

In this appropriations bill, we have included \$71.5 billion in discretionary funding, which is \$1.8 billion less than last year and \$398 million less than the budget request. We have provided the full budget request number of \$6.6 billion for military construction projects, and while we have provided \$1.8 billion less in fiscal year '14, we have included \$64.7 billion in discretionary funding for the VA, which is about \$1.5 billion more than last year. We have included an additional \$20 million to get at the claims backlog and \$17 million more than was requested for electronic medical records.

In this legislation, we are ensuring that we have continued strict oversight of the VA in their reporting requirements on the claims backlog. The length of time it takes veterans to receive the disability benefits that they have earned is just unacceptable, so Mr. BISHOP and I have included language in this bill to have very strict reporting requirements over which we will continue to exercise vigorous oversight in the months ahead at the VA to ensure that the claims backlog is reduced.

We are also introducing a mechanism here that we have found to be very, very effective in the case of electronic

NAYS—189

Barber
Barrow (GA)
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bera (CA)
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Clever
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DeBene
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Duckworth
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Enyart
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallo
Garamendi
Garcia

Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Hahn
Hanabusa
Hastings (FL)
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Holt
Honda
Horsford
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lipinski
Loeback
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maffei
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (NY)
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McIntyre
McNerney
Meng
Michaud
Miller, George
Moore
Moran
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano

Neal
Negrete McLeod
O'Rourke
Owens
Pallone
Pascarell
Pastor (AZ)
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters (CA)
Peterson
Pingree (ME)
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rahall
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman
Schultz
Waters
Waxman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—15

Brown (FL)
Cicilline
Gutiérrez
Harper
Lewis

Meeks
Nolan
Nunnelee
Peters (MI)
Petri

Rangel
Richmond
Rohrabacher
Schwartz
Stockman