

Again, congratulations to Chairman HUNTER and his colleagues for crafting this important legislation and also Mr. COBLE and Mr. RAHALL for their work.

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, may I have a time check, please.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from West Virginia has 10 minutes remaining. The gentleman from California has 9½ minutes remaining.

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. LARSEN), the distinguished ranking member of our Subcommittee on Aviation.

Mr. LARSEN of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5769, the Howard Coble Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act of 2014.

As a former ranking member of the Coast Guard Subcommittee, I am very pleased that this bill provides the necessary resources to keep the men and women of the Coast Guard on the job. I am also pleased this bill makes needed advancements in our Nation's engagement in the Arctic.

Our country faces a steep opportunity curve when it comes to the Arctic. We haven't made the needed investments in that region to protect our environment, our economic interests, and our national security. But as our country gets ready to take over the chairmanship of the Arctic Council in 2015, this bill signals that our country is ready to engage further in Arctic issues. It requires the Coast Guard to come up with a plan for moving our icebreaker fleet forward; it encourages the development of forward operating bases for the Coast Guard in the region; and it improves the ability of the Coast Guard to monitor, patrol, and protect our Nation's Arctic waters.

I am hopeful that this bill will finally push the Coast Guard to reactivate the mothballed Polar Sea icebreaker so that it can act as a bridge towards a new icebreaker fleet. In the longer term, funding a new icebreaker fleet will require a whole of government approach. The Coast Guard simply does not have the acquisition budget to build a new icebreaker fleet on its own.

The Department of Defense, Coast Guard, and National Science Foundation need to work together to develop a funding strategy for assets they will all use. This bill endorses such a strategy.

Finally, I am very pleased that this bill includes \$10 million for the Small Shipyard Grant Program, a successful effort that provides infrastructure spending to shipyards in the Pacific Northwest and around the country that creates jobs and supports local economies.

With that, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

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

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, again, I want to commend our full committee chairman, Mr. SHUSTER; the subcommittee chair, Mr. HUNTER; our ranking member, Mr.

GARAMENDI; and our staffs, as well, for the tremendous work that has gone in to producing this legislation.

Under Chairman SHUSTER's leadership, our Transportation and Infrastructure Committee is indeed demonstrating once again today what bipartisanship can do and the productive manner in which we can work for the American people in what is often described as a dysfunctional city. I know that in the years ahead, the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee will step up to the plate and do its work again, especially in addressing a major transportation bill next year and a major aviation bill that is on its agenda.

I guess it is kind of fitting, Mr. Speaker, that the last bill that Senator ROCKEFELLER and myself are in part being managed by West Virginians. Both of us will be leaving this Congress. West Virginia is the great seafaring State that it is. But I do salute Senator ROCKEFELLER as well for his tremendous leadership as chairman of the Senate Commerce Committee, for his leadership on this legislation and so many other pieces of legislation that have benefited our State of West Virginia in a more direct way, perhaps, but also a benefit to this great country. He is one that has been concerned for all of us, as we all are, about producing jobs for America, and that is what our Transportation and Infrastructure Committee is about.

I commend the staffs and I commend my dear friend Mr. COBLE that so much has been said about and for whom this legislation is named. We have traveled together on a few occasions. During my entire time here, I have not seen any Member of this body conduct themselves in such a true gentleman fashion as HOWARD COBLE does. We all call him our dear friend.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation and, again, commend Chairman HUNTER and Chairman SHUSTER for their bipartisan and cooperative manner in which they have worked on this and so many pieces of legislation.

I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Again, I want to thank the gentleman from West Virginia and my colleague from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) and the great staffs that spent time on this and, of course, the great HOWARD COBLE, who said in one of his elections probably about 10 years ago when he was down by a few hundred votes, I called him up on it election night and his answer was, "Look good, feel good." That is the great HOWARD COBLE.

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

Ms. HAHN. Mr. Speaker, today the House will vote on the bipartisan Howard Coble Coast Guard & Maritime Transportation Act of 2014. This bill is a great step for our nation's Coast Guard and federal maritime transpor-

tation. Under the constraints of limited resources, this important agreement will continue to provide our Coast Guard and Federal Maritime Commission with the ability to protect our nation's international borders while promoting American commerce around the world.

Having served the people of Los Angeles for nearly 15 years on the City Council and now in Congress, I have long appreciated the work of our Coast Guard and Federal Maritime Commission officials who support the largest port complex in the United States. America relies on the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, which is the gateway for forty percent of all maritime commerce, and providing security to these ports keeps goods flowing across the nation.

In addition, this act provides new incentives for the employment of veterans on U.S. flagged vessels, and directs the Secretary of Transportation to work with Congress to create a national maritime strategy to promote the competitiveness of the U.S. flagged fleet, increase the use of short seas shipping, and enhance U.S. shipbuilding capacity. Our nation's ports and maritime commerce drive all aspects of our economy, and this agreement will provide our nation's maritime gateways the federal support to ensure American ports remain the safest and most economical for ship- per around the world.

I am pleased this strong agreement bears the name of our colleague HOWARD COBLE, a fellow member of the Transportation & Infrastructure Committee and a great friend of mine, who has long been a champion of America's Coast Guard and ports. Congress will miss his leadership. I urge the Senate to consider this legislation immediately and send it to the President's desk for his signature.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5769.

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. HUNTER. 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.

□ 1315

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 5771, TAX INCREASE PREVENTION ACT OF 2014, AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 647, ACHIEVING A BETTER LIFE EXPERIENCE ACT OF 2014

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 766 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 766

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 5771) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend certain expiring provisions and make technical corrections, and for other purposes. All points

of order against consideration of the bill are waived. The amendment printed in part A of the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution shall be considered as adopted. The bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended, are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill, as amended, and on any further amendment thereto, to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means; and (2) one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 2. Upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 647) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for the tax treatment of ABLE accounts established under State programs for the care of family members with disabilities, and for other purposes. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. In lieu of the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Ways and Means now printed in the bill, the amendment in the nature of a substitute printed in part B of the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution shall be considered as adopted. The bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended, are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill, as amended, and on any further amendment thereto, to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means; and (2) one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 3. In the engrossment of H.R. 5771 the Clerk shall—

(a) add the text of H.R. 647, as passed by the House, as new matter at the end of H.R. 5771;

(b) conform the title of H.R. 5771 to reflect the addition of H.R. 647, as passed by the House, to the engrossment;

(c) assign appropriate designations to provisions within the engrossment; and

(d) conform cross-references and provisions for short titles within the engrossment.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from Texas is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to my friend, the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER), 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. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, as the calendar year comes to an end, America's small businesses and taxpayers are looking to Congress for certainty before they file their taxes in April of 2015. While far from perfect, the Tax Increase Prevention Act will provide certainty by extending for 1 more year a

number of tax relief provisions that simply would have expired at the end of this year. Put simply, this bill will prevent tax increases on millions of families that would happen if we were not bringing it to the floor today.

And to Mr. KINGSTON, I thank you for your years of service to this body on behalf of the American people and the people of Georgia.

In an ideal world, Mr. Speaker, the House would be debating a more comprehensive approach to tax reform. We would be worried and focusing our activities on growing jobs in America and giving the American people more of their hard-earned money back so they could invest either in their family or in their business—an opportunity to grow our economy to keep America strong—but our Tax Code is holding back America from being competitive and from providing America with more jobs.

American taxpayers deserve what we are doing today, which is an opportunity to work incrementally on a better, simpler, easy-to-navigate Tax Code with certainty, but only for 1 more year. We should be making long-range plans by working with the United States Senate and the President to make sure the American people come up winners. The United States tax rate is currently the highest in the world, and I would prefer to be debating reform, but we are here today for 1 more year's worth of opportunity to keep America where she and her citizens are prepared for the future.

Thanks to the leadership of the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, DAVE CAMP from Michigan, we almost had a chance to fix these issues today, but he came to the rescue and said, "I am going to work with Republicans and Democrats and anybody who will work with me"—meaning the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee—"on helping American business be stronger."

The bottom line is that I believe we are going to work together, and it starts in the House of Representatives to get that work done. So just like the deal that DAVE CAMP started, we are here for the process today of jump-starting American business for yet another year.

Sadly, reports tell us that the President's veto threat undermines these bipartisan negotiations. The things Chairman DAVE CAMP is working on to make American jobs stronger and a reality—and working on in a bipartisan effort—the President of the United States is threatening to veto that very legislation. So, today, despite the veto threat, we are here to do our work.

Today, you will see, Mr. Speaker, Republicans and Democrats certainly have things in the bill which are special and important to them but that, more importantly, are about the American people and opportunities to save and grow jobs.

Earlier this year, and certainly last year, the House passed a number of

permanent extensions of these policies on a bipartisan basis. That means, Mr. Speaker, Republicans and Democrats tried to work together. But the failure of leadership on the Senate side meant those bills were not ever even brought before the Senate to debate them. Worse yet, the President of the United States opposes those efforts.

We are here for one simple reason today. By taking the leadership opportunity, we think we can gain the ability, on a bipartisan basis in the House of Representatives, to give the Senate and the President one more whack at it.

Let me be clear. Even if this legislation is not as ambitious as it could have been, it is still vitally important. I think what we are doing here, under the leadership of JOHN BOEHNER, is to say to the American people that we know what our job is, even if we are not as wildly successful as we want to be. America's small businesses and families actually need, and rely upon, Congress to do its job.

Mr. Speaker, as the Representative of the 32nd Congressional District of Texas, which is essentially Dallas, Texas, and some suburbs, I regularly meet with small businesses—important businesses—that employ people. Earlier in the year, I met with Jamey Rentfrow of Ascend Custom Extrusions in Wylie, Texas. Jamey's company manufactures and designs custom aluminum extrusions for industry. It was a most interesting visit. They call this manufacturing in America.

On the same day, I also met with JoAnn Gardner, a young woman who owns Savage Precision Fabrication. They make parts for military aircraft. They count on us to be able to get our job done to buy the newest and best equipment. It goes to help not only aerospace and military but other civilian needs also. They know that if we do this, the option for them to expense 50 percent of the purchase price of their assets can be taken care of. They can write it off when they want to rather than when the Tax Code wants.

In March, I met with Frank Millsap. It was a most interesting visit. He runs a rod car store called Sachse Rod Shop. He explained to me how our onerous Tax Code prevented him from employing more people.

Mr. Speaker, that is why we are here today. We are here to make sure we take care of the people in our home districts, many of them companies that are small mom-and-pop shops, but others that employ hundreds of people.

The bill would also affect a minority-owned business called Aluma Graphics, which is located in Wylie, Texas, and owned by Randall Williams, a young man who played professional football. When he got out, he decided he was going to go into business. He is realizing how tough it is to manufacture labels and decals for industrial products. This bill would help him and his employees.

These businesses, not just in the 32nd Congressional District but all over our

country, are important, as they provide people the honesty of hard work and the return of continuing to come to work the next day because their company can make the money to get it done.

What we are doing today will extend for only 1 more year the tax provisions, but it will help millions and millions of people.

Additionally, Mr. Speaker, this rule contains a great bill that's called the ABLE Act, which represents, I believe, what our country can do best when Republicans and Democrats and people who care in the United States Congress work together.

Almost every single person in America, I believe, knows someone with a disability: a family member, a best friend, perhaps a brother or sister, or maybe even an aunt or uncle. But we all know that it is only fair that we pay attention to the people we dearly love.

So, today is a game-changer. Today, we are removing what I think is a glass ceiling for disabled people who are held at a disadvantage in our Tax Code. The ABLE Act would make 529 tax-free savings accounts available so that families can cover important expenses such as postsecondary education, housing, career development, and medical expenses not covered by private insurance, Medicaid, or other benefits that might be available to them offered by government.

These tax-free savings accounts will empower families so that their loved ones can have opportunities they have not had in the past. It is personal to me because as my father looks at all of his grandchildren, he can have the opportunity of helping out in their education, but not for Alex Sessions, his grandson with Down syndrome. He can help all the grandkids, but not Alex.

This happens millions of times in our country. There are millions of people with disabilities who count on going into a program or being enrolled in something that the Federal Government pays for, but we discriminate against them. When this gets signed into law, my father, Judge Sessions, will be able to treat Alex as he does his other grandchildren. What is amazing is that Alex needs it more than all of them combined, but he is the one that we wanted to keep in his place because he has a disability called Down syndrome.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is important. It is important to the people whom it impacts. It is important to our families. But more importantly, it is important to our country. The gentleman, ANDER CRENSHAW from Jacksonville, has worked on this bill for 8 years. We are finding a way to put it into a piece of legislation. To help millions of people with their jobs, it needs to pass.

Mr. Speaker, that is why we are here today. We are here doing important work for millions of people. It does matter, and I think we make a huge difference.

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

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me the customary 30 minutes, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Today, we have two bills before us: one extending tax relief measures and another for helping our brothers and sisters and family members with disabilities. These bills, considered under two more closed rules, which I feel I must point out, adds to the tally of the most closed Congress in American history.

□ 1330

First, H.R. 5771, the Tax Increase Prevention Act of 2014. This 1-year extension will cover approximately 60 temporary Tax Code provisions that expired at the end of 2013 or during 2014. Many of the provisions have been previously extended with broad bipartisan support.

This bill is far from perfect, but it provides us a sorely-needed stopgap measure. Our economy has finally emerged from the shadow of the Great Recession, but playing games like this, lurching from one short-term measure to another, will certainly harm that recovery.

This bill will ensure some consistency in the Tax Code that will help the American people avail themselves of the tax credits that they depend on, just in time for the tax filing season.

However, of particular note, left out of this package is the health coverage tax credit, which is made available to workers who have lost their jobs as a result of unfair trade deals and retirees who are at risk of losing their pensions.

In my district, in Rochester, the retirees of Delphi and other local companies depend on the health coverage tax credit to cover their health care bills, and they have been fighting mightily for some relief from the fact that they have lost their pensions and their health care. This is all that they have, the government program.

Denying a critical tax credit to families who have been hit hardest by unfair foreign competition and a tough economy here at home is a mistake, and one I will fight hard to correct.

The second bill we have before us today is H.R. 647, the ABLE Act. This bill will right an injustice that has been impacting millions of Americans with disabilities, their families, and their caregivers.

Under current law, the individuals with disabilities can qualify to receive Social Security Disability Insurance, but there is an asset limit of \$2,000, meaning that if you have more cash than that on hand, your SSDI benefits will be reduced.

This disincentivizes work and saving, creates an unnecessary economic uncertainty, and it does nothing to better the circumstances of our Nation's most vulnerable.

The ABLE Act will change that by creating a tax-free savings account,

with an annual cap on contributions of \$14,000, ensuring that people with disabilities have a better sense of security and ways that friends and family can contribute to their education, transportation, medical expenses, employment support, housing, and more without risking their eligibility for the badly-needed disability insurance.

I am pleased to see this come to the floor with such strong support because my district in Rochester has a vibrant and involved community of people with disabilities.

I commend my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, my friend, the chairman of the Rules Committee, in particular, for the diligent, passionate, and careful work on this important issue.

Mr. Speaker, I have some reservations about these bills, the first bill anyway, but stabilizing the Tax Code and ensuring financial independence for our brothers and sisters does provide much-needed support. So I urge my colleagues to do the best they can on the rule and the bill.

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

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, at this time I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Jackson County, North Carolina (Mr. MEADOWS).

Mr. MEADOWS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman of the Rules Committee for his leadership and his vision and his passion and his great words.

I also want to thank the gentleman from Jacksonville, Florida (Mr. CRENSHAW). He is a true leader, and I am proud to be a cosponsor of the ABLE Act.

Today, we can talk about taxes, we can talk about legislation, but really, what we are talking about is people, Mr. Speaker.

I want to share two personal stories because, for me, I don't have to deal with children with disabilities on a daily basis. I was blessed with two kids that didn't have some of those same challenges.

What I have had is I have experienced the love and the compassion that two children with special needs have given to me over and over.

The first one of those is a young lady, 21 years of age, with Down syndrome named Chloe. Chloe is not only a dear friend but also is someone who has been able to share with me the struggles in her life, the passion in her life, the vision. She has a part-time job.

But the other part of that story is the difficulties that sometimes families with special needs have. What I have seen over and over again is that, even though I was able to experience the love firsthand, that there is a 24-hour, 7-day a week job that parents have to deal with, and some of those challenges are monumental.

We need to address that as a body. We need to partner with those moms and dads across America to make sure that, indeed, what they have to face is

not really handicapped because of a Tax Code that penalizes them.

So the ABLE Act, after 8 long years of work by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. CRENSHAW), hopefully, will be voted on and passed in this very House to provide the needs and the help that those parents so desperately need.

But I also want to share another story about a young lady from my home district who has just turned 1 named Holland Burleson, because, indeed, Down syndrome, whether it is with Chloe or this young lady, has a profound effect; same love, same compassion that I got to experience.

But yet, what happened is that those parents went out, funded a 5K run to bring the awareness to a community up in the mountains of western North Carolina, and overwhelmingly, that community came together, raising funds not just for the benefit of the Burleson family but for the benefit of all of those families.

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

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman an additional 1 minute.

Mr. MEADOWS. I thank the gentleman.

What happened is lives were transformed in that small little town. And so I am here today to speak on behalf of not only great work, but great vision and a partnership in which we can partner with families, moms and dads across this country, to do a job that should have been done long ago, to allow the special needs of those special families to be addressed.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I have one request for time, and so I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. WELCH), within the parameters of the debate time, and provided that no one else shows up who requests time.

Mr. WELCH. I thank the gentlelady.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to reiterate what Mr. SESSIONS said, and thank you for your tremendous service here in this body. So thank you for acknowledging that too.

Mr. Speaker, Congress is broken. We know it, and the American people know it. The difference between us and them is that we can actually do something about it. In fact, that is our job.

But here we go again, ducking our responsibility and not doing our job. We ducked when we failed to pass a long-term transportation bill. We ducked when we failed to meet our constitutional responsibility to debate a new, long-term military commitment in the Middle East.

And now, here we go again with this tax extender bill.

We need tax reform. 435 Members of Congress agree. Both parties agree. This year we had an opportunity. The Ways and Means Committee, under Chairman DAVE CAMP, presented a real plan, real simplification and lower rates, and all of it was paid for.

There were many points of disagreement, as well as agreement in that bill.

In a functioning legislature, we would have debated the Camp bill, modified it, and passed some version of it to move America forward.

Instead, Speaker BOEHNER said the Camp bill was dead on arrival. No discussion, no debate, no progress. More ducking and dodging instead of Congress doing its job.

This tax extender package adds insult to the American people who want tax reform to the injury Congress inflicts by failing to do its job. When we pass tax extenders instead of tax reform, Congress, once again, is back to doing business as usual.

This bill, considered on December 3, is retroactive to January. How can we expect businesses and families to plan when we don't let them know what the rules for the tax year are until the year is nearly over?

It is business as usual when we preach fiscal responsibility, pledging allegiance to a balanced budget, and then pass a bill which adds \$44.7 billion to the taxpayers' credit card.

Mr. Speaker, how can Congress assert today that we will do tax reform next year, tax reform that the American people are demanding, when we are about to repeat the irresponsible practice of passing short-term, retroactive bills, something Congress has been doing year in and year out?

This bill says to the American people that Congress is up to its old tricks. Meet the new Congress—same as the old Congress. Congress says one thing: "We need tax reform," but Congress does another, kicks the can down the road.

Mr. Speaker, I do support some of the provisions in this bill and I would like to vote for them, but Congress must do its job, not dodge its responsibilities.

Mr. Speaker, I urge a "no" vote.

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

Mr. Speaker, we are going to take the gentleman from Vermont up on, really, his issues. We are going to have a Republican House, a Republican Senate, that is able to effectively work with each other, look each other in the eye and find progress for the American people. So I promise the gentleman, he is going to get what he wants and more so that we can grow our economy.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to have as our next speaker a gentleman who, for 8 years, has toiled on the ABLE Act. He is the chief sponsor. He is the young man who has made so many conversations and discussions, not just among our Members here, but also among people all around this country, disability groups.

I earlier accused him of being from Texas. He is actually from Jacksonville, Florida, so I am sure I will get lots of cards and letters about that. We wish he were a Texan, but he is from Florida.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. CRENSHAW).

Mr. CRENSHAW. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding the

time. I thank Chairman SESSIONS for the work that he has done all along the way.

Mr. Speaker, I want to urge the adoption of this rule and the underlying legislation, particularly the ABLE Act, which the chairman just talked about.

Eight years ago I first filed this legislation, and an awful lot of people have spent a lot of time and a lot of energy bringing us to where we are today.

The gentleman before me spoke about how Congress is often dysfunctional. As we look at the ABLE Act today, I think we will have a chance to see what can happen when people work together, when Democrats and Republicans come together, when the House and the Senate work together to do what is best for the people of our country.

I think it is a great illustration of what we can do, and the fact that we have over 380 cosponsors in the House, over 70 sponsors in the United States Senate, is a demonstration of that, what can be accomplished when we put our minds to it and work together.

It has been pointed out that most of us know someone with a severe disability, might be Down syndrome, might be autism. But sometimes it is hard for us to understand the difficulties that they have to go through, along with their families. They face challenges that we can hardly even imagine sometimes.

The ABLE Act seeks to try to remedy that situation, to bring justice, to bring peace of mind to millions of American families who have to live with disabilities every day. It does that by creating these tax-free savings accounts, allows the money that they set aside to grow tax-free as long as they use those proceeds for qualified expenses. And what that does is it simply gives those individuals with disabilities a chance for the American Dream.

They have hopes and dreams just like we all do, and this will give them the tool to open the door to a brighter future, the way to realize their full potential.

□ 1345

We help other people save for college by creating 529 tax-advantaged accounts. We allow people to save for their health care by creating health savings accounts. We allow people to save for their retirements through individual retirement accounts and 401(k)'s.

It seems only fair that we offer individuals with disabilities the same tax-advantaged tools, so they can realize their dreams, maybe get a job, maybe save for the future, maybe go to college.

I just hope that, as we adopt this rule and as we move into the ABLE Act, that we will all continue to work together because I can't think of anything more special, as more of a privilege, than for us as a Congress to speak up for those who so often can't speak for themselves.

I urge the adoption of the rule and of the underlying bill as well.

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

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

A number of people who asked to speak today are on their way here, and we will do that.

I really want to stand up for just a few minutes, pending those several Members coming here, to say to you and to the American people, Mr. Speaker, that this country—America—is a great, great, great country. It is great because of its people. There is a lot that has been said today and on other days about some of our frailties, about some of our warts, about some of the problems that we have.

I think what Mr. CRENSHAW said in his remarks is most appropriate because you have a man who has a number of very important issues that he carries on behalf of his congressional district in Jacksonville, Florida. He spoke about also taking the time to be a voice for millions of people across this country, not just for those whom he saw specifically in Jacksonville.

You heard the gentleman, Mr. MEADOWS, speak very plainly about two Down syndrome young women of our country who are key assets to our country. We weren't asking for anything else today through this ABLE Act that Mr. CRENSHAW has so ably moved forward—it has taken 8 years—than for people to have equity or fairness.

In the larger scheme of things, as a parent of a Down syndrome young man, I looked at where we stood, and said, "Why wouldn't we allow the fairness?"

Really, let's look at it another way. Why would we want to keep these disabled individuals from having fairness? Why do we want to keep them poor and in the same circumstances they are in? Why would we want everyone else to be treated under one set of rules and, because they are disabled, they are treated another way?

These are questions and discussions that have been in my family now for 20 years. I don't know why Alex is my special gift. He is perfect. God made every child perfect in His image. We are the ones who struggle.

Today, we are working together as the House of Representatives for a bill that Mr. CRENSHAW saw a need for, and he had the fortitude and the opportunity today because of JOHN BOEHNER. Yes, CHRIS VAN HOLLEN, a Democrat Member of this body; yes, some United States Senators, including Senator HARKIN of Iowa and, yes, Senator CASEY from Pennsylvania; yes, CATHY MC MORRIS RODGERS, a senior member of our Republican leadership team who, by the way, has a Down syndrome son, Cole—we all worked together. This is a special thing.

I think, today, it ought to be a pat on the back for us, an opportunity for us to say this is important and this is

good. That is what we should remember from today, in that we may not go to sleep knowing our job is done, but that we did something right by coming together as a body.

My dear colleague LOUISE SLAUGHTER, who is from New York, very clearly understood a long time ago, as she put her name on the bill, that this is a good bill. Members of the Rules Committee, who typically don't put their names on bills, put their names on this bill—380 Members of this body. See, there are good things that happen.

I do want to thank my colleague, Ms. SLAUGHTER. I do want to thank people because this is a bipartisan effort. This is a chance for us to work together, and I think we did a good job today.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, in reply to the gentlewoman, I will let her make her closing arguments, and then I will do the same.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, in closing, the Democrats have reservations on these bills, but extending tax credits to ensure continuity in the Tax Code is very important to us, even though we know that large pieces of America have been left out of this bill.

It causes us great sadness, but nonetheless, we recognize the need to get this done. All of us appreciate the opportunity for the brothers and sisters with disabilities to have the stability that they need, and we are certainly in concert with that.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

It has been mentioned a couple of times today, but I also want to thank you, Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Georgia, for your distinguished service, not only to the people of Georgia in your district, but also to the people—your friends—who are in this body, who have benefited from your service on the Appropriations Committee and who knew that you took time, just as we are doing here today, to deal with the intricacies of NIH, to deal with the intricacies of cancer, to deal with the intricacies of disabilities, to deal with the intricacies of our working together as a country and as a body and as Americans to make life better for people.

Mr. Speaker, your years of service here—some 20 years of service that you have given—have been of distinguished service. I have known you for a long time and have admired you.

I want to thank the gentleman, JACK KINGSTON, for his great service to America, which is exactly in line with what we are doing today.

Thank you, sir. I appreciate your hard work. Your being in the chair as we do this is not by accident. It is on purpose. With the distinguished opportunity that you have of serving as the Speaker pro tempore today, I appreciate your great service.

Mr. Speaker, we have made the case today of what we are trying to do. We

are on the floor to bring certainty to the Tax Code for one more year. It is not perfect—the gentleman from Vermont noted that—but it is an opportunity as best as we can do in the environment that we are in, and that is what this is about. It is the knowledge that we are going to wake up and do the best that we can for the American people.

Today is about the American people and their Tax Code. Today is about the ABLE Act and about millions of people with disabilities who are attempting as best as they can to make due with what they have but who, tomorrow, can get fairness and equity in that process. It is about an opportunity for families not to question why but to dig in and help.

Today is yet another opportunity when not only the gentlewoman, Ms. SLAUGHTER, and I may work together in our tutelage as chairman and ranking member of the Rules Committee but when we can have a common sense of purpose. This is not perfect, but the world can be better today and tomorrow.

I would ask my fellow Members to understand that we are here asking for everybody to vote "yes" on the rule. They can do what they want to do on the underlying legislation, but today is an opportunity to give thanks for the opportunities that lie ahead of us that are about others instead of ourselves.

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

The previous question was ordered.

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

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

Ms. SLAUGHTER. 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.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 1 o'clock and 55 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1440

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON) at 2 o'clock and 40 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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