

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, last year's natural disasters in the U.S. Virgin Islands have left thousands of properties damaged and destroyed. The vast majority of those homes, businesses, and critical infrastructure have yet to be repaired.

It is imperative that any funds authorized and intended to be allocated for the Virgin Islands be released to the territory immediately.

While the Federal funding does not include the full amount or all of the requests of the Virgin Islands, it will help substantially in the rebuilding efforts to create better housing opportunities, to help build a resilient utility system, burying lines, creating microgrids, and implementing renewables in our energy portfolio.

Due to the tenuous position of the U.S. territories, the U.S. Virgin Islands has been unable to pay contractors up front for critical repairs. We don't have the millions to pay up front and seek reimbursement from the government.

Treasury and its Secretary has been unwilling to lend us or loan us, under reasonable terms, the money that Congress allocated for us to be loaned.

I am requesting that the Federal Emergency Management Agency expedite the release of the funds to the Sheltering and Temporary Essential Power pilot program immediately so that project contractors and subcontractors may be paid as soon as possible and recovery efforts continue.

Mr. Speaker, when contractors lay off workers, our economy falters. And as hurricane season is beginning, this needs to be done now.

#### COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DONOVAN) laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
Washington, DC, June 7, 2018.

Hon. PAUL D. RYAN,  
The Speaker, House of Representatives,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on June 7, 2018, at 9:04 a.m.:

That the Senate passed S. 1692.

That the Senate passed S. 2857.

That the Senate passed with an amendment H.R. 88.

That the Senate passed without an amendment H.R. 1397.

That the Senate passed without an amendment H.R. 1719.

That the Senate passed without an amendment H.R. 1900.

With best wishes, I am,  
Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.

#### PROVIDING FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 5895, ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2019, AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3, SPENDING CUTS TO EXPIRED AND UNNECESSARY PROGRAMS ACT

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 923 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

#### H. RES. 923

*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 further consideration of the bill (H.R. 5895) making appropriations for energy and water development and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2019, and for other purposes. The further amendment printed in part A of the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution shall be considered as adopted in the House and in the Committee of the Whole. No further amendment to the bill, as amended, shall be in order except those printed in part B of the report of the Committee on Rules and available pro forma amendments described in section 4 of House Resolution 918. Each further amendment printed in part B of the report shall be considered 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, may be withdrawn by the proponent at any time before action thereon, shall not be subject to amendment except amendments described in section 4 of House Resolution 918, 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 further amendments are waived. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill, as amended, to the House with such further 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. 2. Upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 3) to rescind certain budget authority proposed to be rescinded in special messages transmitted to the Congress by the President on May 8, 2018, in accordance with title X of the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act 1974. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. The amendment printed in part C 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 Majority Leader and the Minority Leader or their respective designees; and (2) one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 3. The provisions of section 1017 of the Impoundment Control Act of 1974 shall not

apply to a bill or joint resolution introduced with respect to the special message transmitted under section 1012 of that Act on May 8, 2018.

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

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. TORRES), 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. BURGESS. 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 gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

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

House Resolution 923 provides for the consideration of two important bills related to Federal spending of taxpayer dollars.

The first, H.R. 5895, the combined appropriations bill, containing three individual fiscal year 2019 Energy and Water, Legislative Branch, and Military Construction and Veterans Affairs bills, provides the annual funding for these Federal departments.

The second bill, H.R. 3, the Spending Cuts to Expired and Unnecessary Programs Act, is a critical bill to honor the House Republicans' commitment to eliminating wasteful Federal spending.

The resolution before us this afternoon provides for a structured rule for H.R. 5895. Yesterday, the House passed the first rule pertaining to this bill, providing for 1 hour of general debate on the measure. Today's rule makes in order 40 amendments offered by both Democrats and Republicans.

House Resolution 923 also provides a closed rule for H.R. 3, the rescissions package, but does execute Leader MCCARTHY's amendment which incorporates President Trump's revised and updated spending proposal.

One hour of debate time for H.R. 3 is provided, divided and controlled equally by the majority leader and the minority leader or their respective designees.

Finally, the rule provides the minority the customary motion to recommit on both pieces of legislation under consideration.

H.R. 5895, the Energy and Water, Legislative Branch, and Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act of 2019, funds a net total of \$144 billion in base discretionary spending, \$33 billion for defense, and \$112 billion for nondefense purposes. The totals reflect the amount specified in the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018.

Division A of the appropriations package funds the Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies Appropriations Act at nearly \$45 billion,

providing for national security and energy and water infrastructure investments.

The bill would increase Federal investments in nuclear security by \$600 million above fiscal year 2018, then totaling more than \$15 billion.

As President Trump has repeatedly stated, our Nation must modernize its aging nuclear forces. They are the centerpiece of our deterrent strategy, and we cannot allow them to degrade to a point where they become functionally useless.

To prevent this outcome, nuclear weapons activities, especially Navy nuclear reactors, all continue to receive funding. Congress must not leave the United States unprepared while our adversaries continue to advance their own nuclear weapons programs.

Division A also improves the security of our energy infrastructure. Most Americans take for granted the ability to easily access electricity, but that convenience is tenuous. The electric grid is massive, it is complex, and it is vulnerable to cyber and physical attacks. These threats have become increasingly likely as more operations go online or are connected to a network which is not secure.

This bill appropriates \$117 million to ensure that our energy infrastructure operators have the resources they need to develop these defenses.

□ 1245

Additionally, the bill supports the completion of the Yucca Mountain nuclear waste repository, helping to ease the risk and burden of storing nuclear waste in temporary storage sites across the country.

In 2007, the Energy Independence and Security Act gave the Department of Energy authority to regulate incandescent light bulbs through the law's excessive energy efficiency standards, effectively killing free market competition.

Therefore, I submitted an amendment that would prohibit the use of Federal funds to carry out these onerous enforcement standards. This amendment has been included in the Energy and Water Development appropriations bill every fiscal year since 2011, and I look forward to continued consumer choice in this market.

Division A includes the United States Army Corps of Engineers. In Texas' 26th Congressional District that I represent, the Army Corps has been instrumental in ensuring the thorough maintenance, repair, and safety of Lake Lewisville Dam, which sustained damage due to heavy rains in the north Texas area in 2015.

This is just one example of the important work the Army Corps performs throughout the United States, and the bill increases funding of the agency to more than \$7 billion for fiscal year 2019.

The bill also repeals the massive overreach of Federal authority known as the waters of the United States rule, promulgated by the Environmental

Protection Agency and the United States Army Corps of Engineers. This rule changed the definition of navigable waters subject to Federal regulation under the Clean Water Act, placing significant costs on property owners.

Last, the bill prohibits the use of nuclear nonproliferation projects in Russia without certain notifications from the Secretary of Energy.

Division B appropriates \$3.8 billion for the legislative branch. This encompasses the House of Representatives and joint operations with the Senate.

The House of Representatives is funded at \$1.2 billion, which is \$25 million below the President's budget request. Funding also supports Capitol security and police forces, services for visitors, and Capitol operations and maintenance.

The Capitol Police are funded at \$456 million, an increase of \$30 million above fiscal year 2018. Last year, we learned just how vital the Capitol Police are when they responded to and stopped a shooter who opened fire at a congressional baseball game practice.

The bravery and skill demonstrated by those agents are what allows Members of Congress, our staff, our support personnel, and visitors to go to work or visit the Capitol complex every day without fear. They deserve our full support.

The Office of Compliance is appropriated over \$5 million for employee and Member workplace rights training. This funding will also support a dispute resolution process that is fair and accessible for all.

The bill also includes almost \$580 million for the Government Accountability Office so that it may continue its vital work of oversight and reporting on how Federal programs are using taxpayer dollars.

Two important things that the bill does not fund are a cost-of-living increase for Members of Congress and allowances for former Speakers of the House.

Division C of the appropriations package provides over \$96 billion in discretionary funding for Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, an increase of more than \$4 billion over fiscal year 2018.

Nearly all of the increase in funding goes toward supporting the efforts and the services of the Department of Veterans Affairs. Robust funding for Veterans Affairs will ensure that those who have served our country have access to quality services.

This bill includes a total of \$194 billion in discretionary and mandatory funding for Veterans Affairs, which is \$9 billion more than fiscal year 2018.

Importantly, this bill provides more than \$71 billion for Veterans Affairs medical care and more than \$1 billion in funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs to deploy a new electronic health records system that aligns with the Department of Defense.

Mr. Speaker, this is something that we have been promised since 2006. This

will allow our veterans an easier transition into the Veterans Affairs system than they experience today.

The bill also includes funding for reducing the disability claims backlog so that veterans will receive more timely compensation.

Yesterday, the VA MISSION Act was signed into law. American veterans deserve the best possible care, and this bill gives the Department of Veterans Affairs the resources to work towards providing that care for the 7 million patients who are expected to receive Veterans Affairs treatment in fiscal year 2019.

Additionally, this bill funds construction, operation, and maintenance of housing for our troops and medical and education facilities at over \$10 billion.

This is the first step toward funding the government and its essential programs for fiscal year 2019. This year, Congress will do its job to ensure smart, efficient, and appropriate use of taxpayer dollars.

H.R. 3, the second bill contained in today's rule, is the rescissions package to cut stagnant and unused prior-year Federal funding.

President Trump submitted and recently revised a proposal to rescind approximately \$14.5 billion of budget authority, affecting 15 Federal departments and agencies. These include unobligated balances from the Department of Energy's Advanced Technology Vehicles Manufacturing Loan Program and the Innovative Technology Loan Guarantee Program; the Department of Housing and Urban Development's capital fund; the Department of Justice's Assets Forfeiture Fund; the Department of State's Complex Crisis Fund; and unnecessary funding for the Millennium Challenge Corporation, among other things.

President Trump recently revised his request to withdraw the proposed rescission of emergency Ebola funds as well as supplemental appropriations for Superstorm Sandy recovery and to decrease proposed rescissions to Housing and Urban Development's capital fund and Treasury's capital management fund.

Two provisions related to the Children's Health Insurance Program should be noted.

The first rescinds over \$5 billion that was included in the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015 that supplements the fiscal year 2017 allotments to States. This was in addition to the annual Children's Health Insurance Program appropriation to reimburse States for Children's Health Insurance Program expenses. The remaining funds are no longer needed.

The second provision rescinds almost \$2 billion made available to the Children's Health Insurance Program contingency fund, which is used to provide payments to States that have funding shortfalls. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services currently does

not expect any State to need a payment from the contingency fund during the current fiscal year.

It is important that the American people understand that these Children's Health Insurance Program rescissions will have no impact on the current Children's Health Insurance Program.

Early this year, Republicans passed and signed into law the longest and most generous extension to the Children's Health Insurance Program in its 20-year history. When House Democrats were presented this opportunity, they voted against it not once but twice.

Mr. Speaker, when Federal funds are no longer needed in an agency or have not been obligated, Congress should do the right thing and use these taxpayer dollars to reduce the deficit.

I support passage of the rule to allow debate on these important priorities. I urge Members to support today's rule and both underlying bills.

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

Mrs. TORRES. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I thank the gentleman from Texas for yielding me the customary 30 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, this rule makes 39 amendments in order to the appropriations bill we have been considering this week.

Unfortunately, this appropriations package is made up of three individual appropriations bills. Also, in what is a surprise to us in the minority, this rule also includes a surprising \$15 billion in rescissions—cuts—to programs our communities depend on.

Why aren't we given the opportunity to bring up these bills individually? Considering that nearly 200 amendments were offered to this package while many of us were working in our districts, it is obvious to me that these bills would have benefited from a longer debate.

This rule makes in order 39 amendments to the underlying package, which includes H.R. 5895, the Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies Appropriations Act of 2019; H.R. 5894, the Legislative Branch Appropriations Act of 2019; and H.R. 5786, the Military Construction, Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies Appropriations Act of 2019.

However, 59 additional amendments will not be given an opportunity to be heard, including bipartisan amendments like the Cicilline-Poliquin amendment to prohibit oil drilling on the Atlantic Outer Continental Shelf or the Foster-Hultgren amendment to increase funding for the Department of Energy's Office of Science or the Issa-Roybal-Allard amendment to support programs that improve veteran access to care at qualified health centers. Don't these distinguished Members of this body deserve to have their amendments discussed, debated, and voted on?

This rule also makes in order H.R. 3, the GOP rescission package. Mr. Speaker, this bill has not received a single hearing—not one. This was a last-minute addition which gave no time for amendments to be considered.

The closed rule, which is how the rescissions package comes to the floor, pushes this Congress further into the record books as the most closed Congress in history.

Before I speak more on that, I do want to take a brief moment to highlight the bipartisan manner in which the appropriators acted in crafting the Military Construction and Legislative Branch bills. This is proof that, when this body wants to, we can work together and produce legislation that results in broad, bipartisan consensus.

The Military Construction and Veterans Affairs bill provides a \$4.17 billion increase to the servicemembers we represent—specifically, a \$3.9 billion increase to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The Legislative Branch bill takes more steps we should have taken a long time ago and provides additional resources for training and to help with complaints on sexual harassment and violations of employee rights. None of us here are immune to harassers, but at least this bill moves us forward in addressing the bad behaviors of those who walk among us.

This rule makes in order amendments to the Energy and Water appropriations bill. However, this bill does not follow the same bipartisan path. Instead, this bill is full of poison pill riders that will ultimately make our time here a total waste, as those poison pill riders mean that the Senate will ignore this package as it is written.

Incredibly, when most Americans are asking Congress to make commonsense improvements to our Nation's gun laws, this bill goes in the opposite direction. That is right. This Congress is finally acting on guns—in a cowardly way, by expanding where guns can be brought onto Federal lands, ignoring the cries and the calls from our children—our children who are being murdered in their classrooms, our constituents who are being murdered in movie theaters, our constituents who are being murdered in concert halls in Las Vegas, Nevada, where people go to get married, where people go to have fun, and, yes, they make babies sometimes in Vegas too. But yet we are ignoring their calls for help.

□ 1300

It is amazing that we can go on months without meaningful reforms on gun violence and now we take up a giant spending package that forces Members to vote on yet another expansion of gun access. What are we trying to do?

Again, a cowardice act to expand the use of weapons in our Federal lands. For what? So we can go into the dens of bears and kill them—the momma

bears and the baby bears—while they are sleeping?

That is what we are doing in this Congress.

Perhaps that wouldn't be such a problem if we had a single open rule on the House floor that would allow the House to work its will on this or any other issue Members have with portions of this legislation.

Finally, this rule makes in order H.R. 3, President Trump's and the GOP's rescissions bill. As I mentioned before, this bill saw no hearings. Zero.

But perhaps just as troubling was Ranking Member LOWER's remarks in our Rules Committee hearing last night about how the minority wasn't even consulted prior to this bill coming to the floor, ignoring the thousands of constituents that we represent. So, not only has this bill skipped the normal appropriations process, Democrats have not been given an opportunity to add the voice of their constituents.

Make no mistake, this is a highly partisan bill which does not reflect the House's will. Instead, this is what our constituents hate the most: a Congress that is most dysfunctional.

This bill makes significant cuts to programs that create jobs, grow our economy, and provide healthcare to millions of children in a transparent attempt to appear fiscally conservative after passing a tax bill that added \$1.9 trillion to the deficit and gave most of its benefit to the wealthiest among us.

If we want to rescind something to balance the deficit, how about we start with the \$1 trillion budget-busting tax bill that was passed for the wealthy. That irresponsible law is now the cause of Medicare and Social Security going bankrupt decades earlier.

This bill is a political gimmick to hide the Republican majority's gross mismanagement of our Nation's long-term fiscal health. While the GOP tax giveaway benefited the wealthiest among us, almost half of the cuts in this rescissions package are to the Children's Health Insurance Program. Let me say that again, Mr. Speaker: the Children's Health Insurance Program.

We have \$7 billion eliminated from CHIP. That is right. They didn't blink an eye at a \$2 trillion giveaway to the wealthy, but yet they are squeezing fractional savings from funds intended for children's health insurance.

But that isn't the end of it. So that corporations and millionaires can have a tax break, the House majority has decided to make a collection of cuts that will impact every community: Cuts to economic development; cuts to the Forest Service while the West of America is burning; cuts to Indian housing programs, cuts to foreign assistance; cuts to transportation while our infrastructure is crumbling; cuts to public housing while the growing number of Americans grow homeless; cuts to conservation; and cuts to advanced technology vehicle loans.

What is it that you want to do? Do you want to take us back to the time of Fred Flintstone and Barney Rubble?

I know that my Republican colleagues will say that they aren't cuts because the funding can't be used, but no Federal agencies were asked if they needed a waiver to utilize this funding where they need it the most. I doubt that my colleagues will say they couldn't use this in their communities.

Well, let me put these cuts in the voice of the Great Gazoo: those cuts are dumb and dumber cuts.

Mr. Speaker, that is why I must strongly oppose this rule, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds.

Mr. Speaker, February 9 of this year, the House of Representatives passed the most generous extension of the Children's Health Insurance Program since its inception in 1996. The gentlewoman from California voted against that extension.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. GIBBS), a valuable member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and the Committee on Agriculture.

Mr. GIBBS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the rule for H.R. 5895 that provides essential protections for the current and future health of Lake Erie.

It prevents the Army Corps of Engineers from dumping dredged sediment from the Cuyahoga River in the lake without the approval of the State of Ohio. This dredge sediment can contain harmful contaminants, potentially increasing the risk of polluted fish and wildlife.

Lake Erie is one of Ohio's most precious and important natural resources. It would be irresponsible to reverse the environmental gains we have recently made with the lake, which is why this provision is so important.

Additionally, this bill includes a provision to expand the ability of law-abiding citizens to possess a firearm on Army Corps of Engineers land, so long as they are legally permitted to carry a firearm and are in full compliance with State law and as they are allowed to do on other Federal parks and Federal lands. This provision merely brings the Army Corps recreational property in line with the rules of land owned by the National Park Service and the Fish and Wildlife Service.

Finally, this bill includes a full congressional repeal of the harmful Obama-era WOTUS rule, waters of the United States, an executive overreach that expanded Federal jurisdiction beyond "navigable waters." These provisions are important in ensuring the Federal Government does not impose its will or expand its authority at the expense of States or individuals.

I encourage my colleagues to support this, and I want to commend the chairmen of these committees for the work they have done in the rescissions package in this bill and the Energy and Water bill to move this country forward.

I would also note, Mr. Speaker, historically, if you look back in the past

20 or 30 years in past administrations, both Republican and Democratic, rescissions used to be common practice to claw back money that was never spent or could no longer be spent and bring it back to the Treasury and let the Congress re-appropriate the money as they deem fit.

I encourage my colleagues to support this rule.

Mrs. TORRES. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN), the distinguished ranking member of the Committee on Rules.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, does this Republican majority have amnesia? Did they forget how we got here?

Congressional Republicans blew a nearly \$2 trillion hole in the deficit by giving tax cuts to the wealthy and large corporations. That is trillion with a T. Now they are acting like they are great deficit hawks for bringing forward a bill that rescinds \$15 billion in Federal spending. That is billion with a B. It is a tiny fraction of the trillions of dollars they spent on tax cuts.

You don't have to be some great scholar to see this disparity. It is right here on this chart. This really big red bar, Mr. Speaker, that plunges down to nearly \$2 trillion represents the impact of the Republican tax bill on the deficit. It is actually \$1.9 trillion. It is not good. That really, really, really tiny small bar on the right represents the so-called "savings" that this bill will provide.

For those in the gallery, you are going to need binoculars to see that line. To my Republican colleagues, I am happy to lend you my bifocals so you can see how inconsequential this rescission package is in terms of dealing with our deficit.

Now, don't get me wrong, \$15 million is a lot of money, but in the context of what this Republican House has done to our deficit—blowing a hole in it to give tax cuts to the megarich—in that context, it isn't even a down payment on fixing the deficit.

This bill isn't the result of some great process. Mr. Speaker, there was no process. There was no hearing on the bill. The Appropriations Committee didn't go over these proposed cuts one by one, weighing whether they made sense or not.

This is the result of the whims of President Trump. He seems to change his mind about as often as he logs on to Twitter. How else can the majority explain slashing funds to fight Ebola the same day there is an Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo?

You cannot make this stuff up.

It took language in a manager's amendment to reverse this, just like the majority was forced to reverse cuts to funds designed to help New York and New Jersey recover from Superstorm Sandy. Perhaps if you had a hearing and you listened to Members of Con-

gress, you listened to the committees of jurisdiction, you might avoid these embarrassments.

This bill is also being considered under yet another record-breaking closed rule. That means no Member can offer an amendment on the floor to approve it.

Last month, Republicans officially turned this Congress into the most closed Congress in history. It was only May. We still have 6 months to go before the end of this Congress. Apparently, there is no end in sight for the majority's restrictive process. It would make Vladimir Putin jealous. This is not a process to be proud of. This is a process the Republicans should be ashamed of.

The cuts in this bill aren't harmless. They will hurt real people. Almost half the cuts in this package are to the Children's Health Insurance Program. This bill also hurts farmers by cutting funding they need to carry out important conservation programs.

This bill cuts funding for the Economic Development Administration, an agency focused on economic growth and private sector job creation, at a time when they have a project backlog nationwide. In my own congressional district, I have visited at least 10 high-quality projects seeking investments from EDA. These projects, and countless others all across the country, are now in jeopardy if this rescissions package becomes law.

These are not unnecessary programs, as the bill's title suggests. This funding was appropriated under the FY 2017 omnibus negotiated over just a year ago. Both parties agreed to it. The President signed it into law. Now, President Trump has suddenly changed his mind. Maybe it was something he saw on Fox News, since he takes most of his marching orders from them.

After spending nearly \$2 trillion on tax cuts for the superrich and blowing up the deficit, the majority's bill is like putting a Band-Aid on a gaping wound.

Republicans are trying to trick the American people into thinking that somehow they care about fiscal responsibility. Well, they are not fooling anyone.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ROUZER). The Chair would remind Members to refrain from references to occupants of the gallery.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out that as of June 7 of this year, Republicans in the 115th Congress have provided consideration for over 1,200 amendments on the House floor.

Mr. Speaker, during the entirety of the 111th Congress, when Speaker Pelosi was Speaker, the Democrats allowed less than 1,000 amendments to be considered on the floor. Their majority blocked nearly 3,000 amendments that year in Congress.

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

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself an additional 30 seconds.

I would like to recognize that on February 9 of this year, the most generous extension of the Children's Health Insurance Program—for 10 years' time—was passed by the House and eventually signed into law. The gentleman from Massachusetts fought against that.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. KNIGHT).

□ 1315

Mr. KNIGHT. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the rule.

I want to thank the chairman and ranking member for the inclusion of language in the E&W report that would launch a new initiative at the Department of Energy to aggressively drive down costs and improve the performance of grid-scale energy storage technologies.

This report language is similar to the BEST Act, which I sponsored and of which the ranking member is a cosponsor. The BEST Act is a bipartisan authorization bill that directs the Secretary of Energy to establish a moonshot goal of three demonstrations of grid-scale battery storage that will meet aggressive commercialization targets for cost, performance, and durability.

This concept is modeled after the success of the DOE's SunShot Initiative, which brought down the cost of solar energy by 75 percent in less than 5 years.

One of the biggest challenges to greater incorporation of new energy sources into the power grid is the lack of cost-competitive grid-scale solutions. Intermittent energy sources cannot reach their potential without commercially viable storage facilities. We all know this.

Much of the energy we produce is lost, diminishing utility productivity. While the DOE has issued grants to pursue better battery storage, funding has been too dispersed to produce the breakthroughs needed to transform our electricity grid. This initiative will leverage work currently being done in the Office of Science to set a moonshot goal for energy storage technology.

In a further sign of the merit of these demonstrations, the Senate E&W bill also includes very similar report language.

Mrs. TORRES. Mr. Speaker, we cannot continue to allow the rewriting of history. The majority has blocked over 2,000 amendments, and it is only June.

Mr. Speaker, the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act would shortchange our veterans by subjecting funding for their healthcare programs to onerous budget restraints. This would force funding for veterans healthcare to compete with other important veterans programs.

Therefore, if we defeat the previous question, I will offer an amendment to the rule to include Representative

LAMB's legislation, H.R. 5805, to fix the VA Choice budget shortfall and Representative CARTER's amendment to MILCON-VA which includes more funds for vital veteran healthcare initiatives.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. LAMB) to discuss our proposal.

Mr. LAMB. Mr. Speaker, I rise today so that we can finish the work that we started with the VA MISSION Act.

Just yesterday, the President signed the VA MISSION Act into law, and it is a good bill. But the words on that piece of paper and his signature, Mr. Speaker, are not what takes care of our veterans. It is the doctors and nurses in our VA facilities who do that. The VA MISSION Act gives us a chance to make their jobs easier and let them do it better.

But we have to be honest about the fact that it also poses serious risks because of these strict budget caps. These budget caps were in place, Mr. Speaker, before we ever did the VA MISSION Act. I don't know if they were put in place because people had lost faith in the VA, but I recently visited two VA hospitals in the Pittsburgh area and came away with a renewed faith in what the VA can do.

I met a man who was a Vietnam veteran, wheelchair-bound, who has lived in the VA hospital for 3 years. If things were as bad as its critics say, you might expect a man like that to be downtrodden or upset with the VA. Instead, when I asked him how he was feeling, tears came to his eyes and his voice choked with emotion as he described for me the way that the director of that hospital comes to mass with him every morning and asks about his family.

We had that conversation in a kitchen built inside that hospital that looks like the kitchen in any nice home. The nurses bring in food of their own to cook for the patients of theirs. It operates like a real family.

This is what it looks like, Mr. Speaker, when we keep our promises to our veterans and, more accurately, when our doctors and nurses keep that promise on our behalf.

But all of this is at risk if we do not finish what we started with the VA MISSION Act. If we do nothing, the money that we have appropriated for the Veterans Choice Program will bust the strict budget caps that VA is under, and that will trigger automatic, indiscriminate cuts across the board.

Mr. Speaker, that man asked me for one thing. He said that next year on Memorial Day he was hoping that they could have a cookout and that I would come back and have a hot dog with him.

When that happens 1 year from now, Mr. Speaker, that same VA hospital may very well be under the strict budget cuts. Something like a cookout would be seen as an extravagance if you are getting 25 percent, 30 percent cuts across the board. And we will be responsible for that, Mr. Speaker. That is the only thing that man asked for.

He has been cared for. We have gotten him the care he deserves. We need to ensure that for the next generation. We can fix that today. We can exempt the new money in the VA MISSION Act from the strict budget caps by voting "no" on the previous question so that my bill, H.R. 5805, can be made in order.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 2 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, I certainly appreciate the gentleman's service to our country. I would point out that I worked as a physician in a VA facility in the 1970s, and I am well aware of the good work that the doctors and nurses in VA facilities provide.

I would like to point out that, in the Statement of Administration Policy, the administration expected the MISSION Act to be in place by the beginning of fiscal year 2018. Do remember that this was one of the promises that then-candidate Trump promised to the Nation, that he would make the funding of the veterans programs a priority, and I believe he has done that.

Continuing to quote from the administration: "The delay in enacting the MISSION Act's new community care program increases the requirements to continue the VA's current traditional community care program by an additional \$1.6 billion in fiscal year 2019."

Here is the important point: "The administration looks forward to working with Congress to secure this funding within the existing nondefense discretionary cap."

I think it is fair to say there is more to come.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COMER). Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

Mrs. TORRES. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Maine (Ms. PINGREE).

Ms. PINGREE. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from California for yielding me the time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to the rule for H.R. 3 as well as the underlying bill. As a member of the House Appropriations Committee, I do not believe we should be retroactively taking back already approved funding to pay for tax cuts to corporations.

There are countless ludicrous provisions in this bill to cut rural housing, conservation, and other programs that support communities, farmers, and those in need. I would like to focus on one provision in H.R. 3 that is particularly upsetting because it would rescind over \$14 million from USDA's Value Added Producer Grant program, one of the only USDA grants that go directly to farmers' pockets.

Let me be absolutely clear. Despite what the administration has said, these are funds that farmers have already applied for. Those applications were already under review by the USDA when the rescission package was introduced. Projects are ready to go and jobs are waiting to be created with this funding.

It makes me very angry to see that the administration's rescission proposal describes these grants as wasteful and specifically identifies a chocolate-covered peanut project as an example of alleged wasteful spending.

This is not about chocolate-covered peanuts. This is about helping farmers diversify their businesses and providing consumers with new products on which they are willing to spend a little extra.

Farmers are facing very challenging economic times, and I think we should be doing everything we can to support farmers in finding new markets, whether that is by processing milk to make yogurt, making jam from wild blueberries, or even coating peanuts in chocolate.

Ironically, on the same day that the administration released its rescission proposal, the USDA's Economic Research Service released a report on how successful VAPG has been. The report shows that businesses that receive VAPG funding provide more jobs for their communities and were less likely to fail than similar nonrecipient businesses. VAPG works. In Maine and across the country, a little support to farmers through VAPG can go a long way.

I urge my colleagues to oppose the rule for H.R. 3 as well as the underlying bill.

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

Mrs. TORRES. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, as a senior member of the Homeland Security Committee, I am opposing all of the bills under this rule, including the underlying bill, but in particular H.R. 3, which is a danger to childcare development, Pell grants, and election security, meaning, Mr. Speaker, they are cutting those dollars.

But the main element of my opposition is the crisis on the border. I want this House to recognize that you have individuals who have crossed for humanitarian reasons who are being treated and violated like in a third-world country that would be inhumane.

You have Guatemalans, some of whom now are facing the tragedy of the volcano, coming who speak an indigenous language, and they are lumped together 50, 100 at a time.

Their children are snatched away from them. This is a policy that is going to be further funded by the rescissions in this bill. It is imperative that anyone who has a humane bone in their body stand up against ripping children away from individuals.

As a member of the Committee on Homeland Security and the Committee

on the Judiciary, that was not the policy. The policy was for children who came unaccompanied, not children with their parents.

In addition, you have children who have not seen their mothers—who are 4 years old, who are infants—for weeks at a time and cannot speak English.

Again, you have Guatemalans who are not speaking Spanish, English, or a language that is interpreted in the courts. It is an indigenous language. They do not know that you are ruling against them, as it relates to their plea for asylum.

This bill and the rescissions will give more funding for those kinds of inhumane deportation and more dollars to separate children from their parents.

For God's sake, this is not America. We must stop it now. Oppose the bill.

Mrs. TORRES. Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to close.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 1 minute.

Mr. Speaker, I will point out that one of the things that the Military Construction and VA appropriation does fund is the improvements to the VA Electronic Health Record. This is something that has been sought by this Congress and previous administrations going back to 2006. I am happy to say that in this appropriations bill it is being taken care of.

Three administrations is too long for that to happen. I am grateful for the focus that the administration put on this problem, and I am grateful that they have finally gotten it solved.

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

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

I have no doubt of the importance of the legislation this rule makes in order. However, I struggle to believe that this is the most important work we could be doing today.

Instead, perhaps we can fix the broken immigration laws that President Trump has cited as his reason for separating families and children on our Nation's border. Fear and intimidation are no way to make policy. The Trump administration has picked the cruelest way to punish those who are fleeing violence.

The result is broken families and lost children. Since October, more than 700 children have been inhumanely separated from their parents. More than 100 of these children are less than 4 years old.

Using family separation as a scare tactic to prevent families from coming to this country will never work, and it is in the same cruel mindset as using rape as a weapon of war. These families come here looking for one thing: shelter. Punishing a mother by separating her from her child is not only immoral; it is inhumane. It goes against the fundamental human right of the family unit.

Separating them from their parents is simply anti-American. However, for some reason, President Trump has re-

peatedly said that he is bound by the law to rip these families apart.

□ 1330

#### PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mrs. TORRES. Mr. Speaker, parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from California will state her parliamentary inquiry.

Mrs. TORRES. Mr. Speaker, what is the law requiring the separation of parents and children at the border?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair does not respond to inquiries regarding the status of the law. That is a matter for debate.

Mrs. TORRES. Mr. Speaker, perhaps the reason the Speaker can't answer is that the law simply doesn't exist. However, this is the United States Congress. We make the laws. But unfortunately, this isn't what we are doing here. No. Instead, we are taking up a bill to put more guns on public lands and cut funding for energy efficiency research. For this reason and many other concerns I have with the number of amendments which were not made in order, I must oppose this rule.

This Congress is now the most closed Congress in history. It is forcing its Members to vote on bills which haven't been given a real debate. It is clear the majority is attempting to rewrite history.

Mr. Speaker, Canada did not burn the White House. The American people know better. None of the work we do today will undo their deficit-busting bill, nor will it reunite the families the administration has destroyed.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to oppose the previous question and the rule, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, as of June 7, 2018, Republicans in the 115th Congress have provided for consideration of over 1,200 amendments on the House floor. Over 570 of those amendments have been proposed by Democrats, 480 proposed by Republicans, and 190 were bipartisan. That is 46 percent Democratic amendments, 39 percent Republican amendments, and 16 percent were bipartisan.

By contrast, during the entire 111th Congress, that was the last Congress where Speaker PELOSI was the Speaker of the House, Democrats were in the majority. During the entire 111th Congress, Speaker PELOSI allowed less than 1,000 amendments to be considered on the House floor, and, in fact, the Democratic majority blocked 3,000 amendments, with roughly 2,400 during, actually, the first session, the first year of that Congress.

These numbers include measures where the summaries of amendments submitted are publicly available, but at that time, due to the lack of the majority's transparency, the number is likely much higher that were blocked.

Now, look, Chairman SESSIONS of the Rules Committee has made it a point



to ensure that every single Member has the opportunity to submit their amendments and come to the Committee on Rules and share their thoughts and concerns. And as the gentlewoman knows well, there is no clock in the Rules Committee. Any Member can come and spend as much time with us as they wish.

Mr. Speaker, today's rule provides for the consideration of two important pieces of legislation: H.R. 5895, the Energy and Water, Legislative Branch, and Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act of 2019, and H.R. 3, the Spending Cuts to Expired and Unnecessary Programs Act. Both are responsible measures that take seriously our responsibility to be vigilant stewards of the Federal taxpayers' dollars.

I want to thank the President for his leadership in eliminating unused and unnecessary funding from past years, a responsible approach that until this President has been underutilized. I urge my colleagues today to support the rules and the two underlying pieces of legislation.

The material previously referred to by Mrs. TORRES is as follows:

AN AMENDMENT TO H. RES. 923 OFFERED BY  
MS. TORRES

In the first section, strike "printed in part A of the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution" and insert "specified in section 4 of this resolution, modified by adding at the end the text of H.R. 5805 as introduced."

Add at the end the following new section:  
"SEC. 4. The amendment referred to in the first section is as follows:

'Page 165, after line 14, insert the following:

SEC. 239. For an additional amount for the Department of Veterans Affairs, \$1,138,000,000 for the programs and activities authorized in the VA MISSION Act of 2018 and the amendments made by such Act, which shall be in addition to amounts otherwise made available in this Act for such purpose, of which—  
(1) \$600,000,000 shall become available for the Veterans Community Care Program under section 1703 of title 38, United States Code, as amended by the VA MISSION Act of 2018, on the effective date specified in section 101(b) of such Act; and  
(2) \$253,000,000 shall be available for the Family Caregivers Program under section 1720G of title 38, United States Code, as amended by such Act:

*Provided*, That amounts made available under this section shall remain available until September 30, 2020."

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 be-

fore 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 Member leading the opposition to the previous question, who may offer a proper amendment or motion and who controls the time for debate thereon."

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

Mr. BURGESS. 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.

Mrs. TORRES. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 and clause 9 of rule XX, this 15-minute vote on ordering the previous question will be followed by 5-minute votes on:

Adopting the resolution, if ordered; and

Agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 227, nays 185, not voting 15, as follows:

[Roll No. 240]

YEAS—227

Abraham	Granger	Palmer
Aderholt	Graves (GA)	Paulsen
Allen	Graves (LA)	Pearce
Amash	Graves (MO)	Perry
Amodei	Griffith	Pittenger
Arrington	Grothman	Poe (TX)
Babin	Guthrie	Posey
Bacon	Handel	Ratcliffe
Banks (IN)	Harper	Reed
Barletta	Harris	Reichert
Barr	Hartzler	Renacci
Barton	Hensarling	Rice (SC)
Bergman	Herrera Beutler	Roby
Biggs	Hice, Jody B.	Roe (TN)
Bishop (MI)	Higgins (LA)	Rogers (AL)
Bishop (UT)	Hill	Rogers (KY)
Black	Holding	Rohrabacher
Blackburn	Hollingsworth	Rokita
Blum	Hudson	Rooney, Francis
Bost	Huizenga	Rooney, Thomas
Brady (TX)	Hultgren	J.
Brat	Hunter	Ros-Lehtinen
Brooks (AL)	Hurd	Roskam
Brooks (IN)	Issa	Ross
Buchanan	Jenkins (KS)	Rothfus
Buck	Jenkins (WV)	Rouzer
Bucshon	Johnson (LA)	Royce (CA)
Budd	Johnson (OH)	Russell
Burgess	Johnson, Sam	Rutherford
Byrne	Jordan	Sanford
Calvert	Joyce (OH)	Scalise
Carter (GA)	Katko	Schweikert
Carter (TX)	Kelly (MS)	Scott, Austin
Chabot	Kelly (PA)	Sensenbrenner
Cheney	King (IA)	Sessions
Coffman	King (NY)	Shimkus
Cole	Kinzinger	Shuster
Collins (GA)	Knight	Simpson
Collins (NY)	Kustoff (TN)	Smith (MO)
Comer	Labrador	Smith (NE)
Comstock	LaHood	Smith (NJ)
Conaway	LaMalfa	Smith (TX)
Cook	Lamborn	Smucker
Costello (PA)	Lance	Stefanik
Cramer	Latta	Stewart
Crawford	Lesko	Stivers
Culberson	Lewis (MN)	Taylor
Curbelo (FL)	LoBiondo	Tenney
Curtis	Long	Thompson (PA)
Davidson	Loudermilk	Thornberry
Davis, Rodney	Love	Tipton
Denham	Lucas	Trott
DeSantis	Luetkemeyer	Turner
DesJarlais	MacArthur	Upton
Diaz-Balart	Marchant	Valadao
Donovan	Marino	Wagner
Duffy	Marshall	Walberg
Duncan (SC)	Massie	Walden
Duncan (TN)	Mast	Walker
Dunn	McCarthy	Walorski
Emmer	McCaull	Walters, Mimi
Estes (KS)	McClintock	Weber (TX)
Faso	McHenry	Webster (FL)
Ferguson	McKinley	Wenstrup
Fitzpatrick	McMorris	Westerman
Fleischmann	Rodgers	Williams
Foxx	McSally	Wilson (SC)
Frelinghuysen	Meadows	Wittman
Gaetz	Messer	Womack
Gallagher	Mitchell	Woodall
Garrett	Moolenaar	Yoder
Gianforte	Mooney (WV)	Yoho
Gibbs	Mullin	Young (AK)
Gohmert	Newhouse	Young (IA)
Goodlatte	Norman	Zeldin
Gosar	Nunes	
Gowdy	Olson	

NAYS—185

Adams	Bustos	Cleaver
Aguilar	Butterfield	Clyburn
Barragán	Capuano	Cohen
Bass	Cárdenas	Connolly
Bera	Carson (IN)	Cooper
Beyer	Cartwright	Correa
Bishop (GA)	Castor (FL)	Costa
Blumenauer	Castro (TX)	Courtney
Blunt Rochester	Chu, Judy	Crist
Bonamici	Cicilline	Crowley
Brady (PA)	Clark (MA)	Cuellar
Brown (MD)	Clarke (NY)	Cummings
Brownley (CA)	Clay	Davis (CA)

DeSaulnier  
Deutch  
Dingell  
Doggett  
Doyle, Michael  
F.  
Ellison  
Engel  
Eshoo  
Espaillat  
Esty (CT)  
Evans  
Foster  
Frankel (FL)  
Fudge  
Gabbard  
Gallego  
Garamendi  
Gomez  
Gonzalez (TX)  
Gottheimer  
Green, Al  
Green, Gene