

when we rise and oppose rules because we do not believe they are fair. In this instance, however, I rise in strong support of the rule. I think the Committee on Rules has issued a rule which is fair to both sides. I am sure in its protection of certain provisions of the bill and items within the bill that have not been technically authorized, that is appropriation accounts that have not had authorizing bills passed, that there would obviously be individuals who might want to object and they might object to the rule for that reason. But the Committee on Rules has been fair in treating both sides equally.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from California (Chairman DREIER) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SESSIONS) and the other members of the Committee on Rules for passing a rule that I think provides for a fair and free and open debate on this bill. Therefore, I am going to urge my colleagues on this side of the aisle to strongly support the rule.

Mr. Speaker, I would observe that when we come to debate on the bill itself, as I did in the Committee on Rules, I will express reservation about the cuts that have been recommended by the committee. I think those cuts are unfortunate, and I think they will have an adverse impact. But as we know, this is not the final step on the process of passing and adopting this bill. Therefore, we will have other opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the distinguished gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. LUCAS), my colleague who is coming into the Chamber.

Mr. LUCAS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, it is my intention to ask for the yeas and nays on the previous question when the question is called because it is my understanding that if the previous question is defeated, then an amendment will be in order to preclude a COLA adjustment in Members' pay. I support doing that.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I appreciate the gentleman from Kentucky. He has discussed this matter with me. I understand his view. And while he and I disagree on this issue, I certainly respect his right and his appropriate action in bringing this matter to the attention of the House.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the rule, strong support of the previous question, and thank the gentleman from Texas for yielding me this time.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Lexington, Kentucky (Mr. FLETCHER).

Mr. FLETCHER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SESSIONS) for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, although I have utmost respect for the Committee on Rules and the work they do, I rise to express my opposition to the previous question to the rule on the Treasury-Postal appropriations bill. As the rule is currently written, the amendment offered by the gentleman from Alabama (Mr.

RILEY) to disallow the Members' COLA is not included. If the previous question is defeated, Members will have an opportunity to change the rule to allow a vote against the COLA.

Mr. Speaker, it is my intention, if the previous question is defeated, to offer an amendment to the rule that would disallow the Members' COLA. For that reason I intend to vote against the previous question and urge my colleagues to do the same.

The proposed amendment is as follows:

At the end of the resolution, insert the following:

SEC. 2. Notwithstanding any other provision of this resolution, it shall be in order to consider the amendment contained in section 3 of the resolution. The amendment may be offered only at the appropriate place in the reading of the bill, shall be considered as read, shall not be subject to amendment or demand for a division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. All points of order against the amendment are waived.

At the end of the bill, insert after the last section (preceding the short title) the following new section:

SEC. . Section 601(a) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 31) is amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 601. (a) Until adjusted under section 225 of the Federal Salary Act of 1967 (2 U.S.C. 351 and following) or other provision of law, the annual rate of pay for—

"(1) each Senator, Member of the House of Representatives, and Delegate to the House of Representatives, and the Resident Commissioner from Puerto Rico,

"(2) the President pro tempore of the Senate, the majority leader and the minority leader of the Senate, and the majority leader and the minority leader of the House of Representatives, and

"(3) the Speaker of the House of Representatives,

shall be the rate payable for such position as of the date of enactment of the Treasury and General Government Appropriations Act, 2000."

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

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Surfside, Texas (Mr. PAUL).

(Mr. PAUL asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

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Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I rise with some bit of ambivalence with this rule, but I will support the rule. I was concerned about a special issue with the Post Office and was hoping that we could address this in detail, and that has to do with the regulations that I consider very onerous and very maliciously placed on private mailboxes, the Commercial Receiving Agencies. I was very hopeful that we could deal with that. But it appears we will have another chance to do that at a later date.

I have a House joint resolution under the Congressional Review Act, H.J. Res. 55. If that were to pass, we could rescind all those regulations. Currently, it is my understanding that

these regulations have been put on hold. They will not go into effect soon. But the problem still exists, and I see it as a serious problem.

First, let me talk about the Post Office. The Post Office is a true monopoly. In the free market, there are no true monopolies. Only government can allow a true monopoly.

We do have enough freedom in this country to some degree to offer competition to even this monopoly of the Post Office. By doing this, the private post offices have been set up to give additional service and privacy to many of our citizens, and they are well used.

But now the Post Office sees this as a competition because they are providing services that the Post Office cannot or will not provide. So instead of dealing with this, either providing legalized competition in the Post Office or providing these same services, instead, the Post Office has issued these onerous regulations to attack these customers.

They are forcing these private mailbox operators to develop profiles on every customer, have double identification, and then make this information available to the public and to the Post Office for no good reason.

When I first got involved in this, I did not know which constituencies would be interested in this issue. But one thing that I have discovered is that many of those women who need privacy will use private post offices to avoid the husband or some other individual who may be stalking them. They have been writing to me with a great deal of concern about what these regulations will do.

Also, it is a great cost to these operators as well as to all the customers. The Post Office would mandate that a special address be placed on each piece of mail, indicating that they are receiving mail at one of these private post offices. This costs a lot of money. There will be a lot of mail returned. If these regulations had gone into effect this week, as had been planned, a lot of mail, to the tune of hundreds of thousands of pieces, if not millions, would have been returned to the senders, and they would not have been permitted to be delivered.

I think this is tragic. I think it has to be dealt with. I am disappointed that we cannot do much with it today, but I know there is a growing support in this country and in this Chamber for doing something about this problem.

We as a Congress have the ability, and the authority, to undo regulations. For too long, we have allowed our regulatory bodies to write law, and we do nothing about it. Since 1994, we have had this authority, but we never use it. This is a perfect example of a time that we ought to come in and protect the people, try to neutralize this government monopoly and help these people who deserve this type of protection and privacy.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER).