

executives, some of whom are no longer with the company.

Every day in southern Nevada, families face tough decisions about their economic futures; can they afford to stay in their home? Are they going to be able to provide for their children's future?

I find it insulting that the CEO of AIG said that his decision to give out these bonuses was "difficult." Difficult is trying to figure out how to keep a roof over your head when you've lost your job. Difficult is providing for your children when your hours at work have been cut back. Difficult is not deciding if you are going to dole out hundreds of millions of dollars to irresponsible Wall Street executives.

I urge Congress and the administration to act quickly to recoup the taxpayers' money.

NORTHERN IRELAND

(Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, on March 7 and 9, the young Government of Northern Ireland was put to the test. Two British soldiers and a policeman were killed by fringe groups trying to change peace to chaos, trying to reach the future through a return to the past. They failed, and the people of Northern Ireland became stronger.

The people voted for peace and acceptance of the Good Friday Agreement. The people voted for their First Minister Peter Robinson and Deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness, who jointly condemned the murders.

The people of Northern Ireland grew stronger when thousands of Catholics, Protestants, Unionists, and Nationalists marched together saying "No going back."

As Americans, as fellow lovers of freedom and democracy, we are with the people of Northern Ireland. We are both nations of law, and can only survive when the law is upheld.

God be with the families who have suffered a loss. And God bless the people and the peace of Northern Ireland.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS TO SUSPEND THE RULES

Ms. PINGREE of Maine. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 257 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 257

Resolved, That it shall be in order at any time on the legislative day of March 19, 2009, for the Speaker to entertain motions that the House suspend the rules relating to a measure addressing excessive compensation paid to employees of corporations in which the Federal government has a significant interest.

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

Ms. PINGREE of Maine. For the purposes of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART). All time yielded during consideration of the rule is for debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. PINGREE of Maine. I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and to insert extraneous materials into the RECORD.

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

There was no objection.

Ms. PINGREE of Maine. Mr. Speaker, I yield as much time to myself as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, people across the country are rightly outraged by the egregious nature of the AIG bonuses. It is unconscionable for AIG to pay out \$165 million in bonuses to the same top executives who mismanaged the company to the point of failure.

It is fundamentally wrong to be rewarding the very same people who ran AIG while it was losing billions and billions of dollars with risky schemes that directly led to the staggering \$170 billion bailout last year. It is a stunning example of greed and shamelessness, and it is gross mismanagement and misuse of taxpayer funds that borders on criminal.

People in Maine, my district, and around the country are angry. I have heard from hundreds of my constituents sharing their outrage. One resident of Wells, Maine, in the straightforward way that my constituents do, wrote to me in this manner. He said, "Let AIG fail. Let those greedy, blood-sucking executives find out what it means to lose their life savings. You need to tell those that want our tax dollars, these are the conditions, clear and simple. And if you don't want to use it for what we want, you will get nothing." He went on to say, "It has become a sad day in our history when we have to lose our retirements, and then have to give billions to those that have caused the problems, and then, in turn, they give it to themselves as bonuses."

Another Mainer wrote, "I am writing to you because I am absolutely appalled that we, as citizens and taxpayers, have given billions of dollars to AIG, only to have that company give us all the proverbial finger and pay out \$165 million in bonus money to their staff. AIG's conduct, given their own monetary losses that are in the billions of dollars, is criminal."

The small businesses in my State of Maine are doing what businesses around the country are doing; they are diversifying, they are freezing wages. They are using their own resources, adopting cost-saving measures, whatever it takes to stay in business and keep people in their jobs.

Like so many businesses around the country, a businessman in Portland recently chose to dig into his own pocket and use his own money so he wouldn't have to lay off his employees. And just last week, I met with the owners of a small machine shop that had been growing. They came to me with questions about how they could better use the money in the recovery package to stay in business just to stay afloat. They weren't looking to line their own pockets, they were asking for help to keep people employed and keep their business afloat. These are the types of people who are stung the hardest by the AIG bonuses.

Families and businesses in Maine and across the country are struggling to make ends meet and stay in their homes. And they are helping each other out of a shared sense of responsibility. Meanwhile, on Wall Street, we see executives who seem to think they live by a different set of rules and who refuse to take responsibility for the damage they have caused. It is a perfect example of why we have, and will continue to have, a commitment to transparency and oversight in government.

When the House passed TARP last year before I was here, this type of abuse is exactly what the American people were afraid of. We knew there was a chance of waste, fraud or abuse, and now it has come to light. We are here today to fix it. We will continue to forge ahead to fix our struggling economy.

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

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend, Ms. PINGREE, for yielding the time and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

What concerns me about this scandalous AIG bonus issue is that the Obama administration was asleep at the wheel. Two weeks ago, the President's press secretary was asked, is the administration confident that it knows what happened to the tens of billions of dollars given to AIG? The response from the President's press secretary was, "It is confident."

Yesterday, we learned that the Obama administration asked the Senate Banking Committee chairman, Mr. DODD, to insert a provision in last month's so-called economic stimulus legislation that had the effect of authorizing AIG's bonuses. First, that gentleman who I just referred to said that he didn't know how the bonus authorization had made it into the legislation, but the next day he said yes, he authorized it after being asked to do so by the Obama administration.

Was the administration complicit? I think this is an issue that Congress needs to investigate. Yesterday, I made a motion on this floor that would have allowed debate on H.R. 1577, a bill introduced by my colleague, Representative PAULSEN, and the rest of the Republican freshmen, to deal with the

AIG bonus scandal. My motion was defeated, but it garnered bipartisan support. Every Republican voted for it, and so did eight Democrats on what is a procedural motion—very interesting. Although the motion failed, I am pleased that it attracted the attention of the majority leadership and they finally decided to take action on this scandal.

So, here we are today. Although I support the bills we will consider today, I find it quite unfortunate the way in which the majority leadership has decided to handle this scandal. The heavy-handed process they are using will block all Members of this House from offering amendments. It will also block every procedural right the minority has to shape legislation, including the motion to recommit. It will even limit debate on this important issue to a total of 40 minutes.

Why is the majority refusing Members to participate in the legislative process, Mr. Speaker? This is an issue that Members on both sides of the aisle feel outrage about, so why not allow Members to participate? Is it because the majority is afraid of the minority's thoughtful ideas? Actually, as Congress debated the so-called stimulus bill, it was the Republicans—the thoughtful opposition—who advocated for transparency and accountability, but again, the majority blocked effort after effort by the minority to participate in the legislative process. That is unfortunate.

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

Ms. PINGREE of Maine. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY).

Mrs. MALONEY. I thank the gentlelady from the great State of Maine for yielding, and for her important leadership on the Rules Committee.

Mr. Speaker, it has become somewhat rare for the Members of this body to find themselves in virtually universal agreement, but outrage over the retention bonuses for the very members of the AIG Financial Products Division, who brought a corporate giant to its knees and the economy of our Nation to a standstill, has produced such an agreement.

It would be both morally reprehensible and fiscally irresponsible for us to quietly hand over millions to those who have cost this country billions. And it is a rare cause that compels so many Members, all acting independently, to craft bills aimed at righting the same wrong.

The bill we consider now to tax bonus payments, such as the ones in question at AIG, at the effective rate of 90 percent sends a message that cannot be mistaken. The game is finished, the casino is closed.

I applaud Speaker PELOSI, Mr. MILLER, and Chairman RANGEL of the Ways and Means Committee for coming together so swiftly to react and incorporating ideas from many bills—from my colleague, STEVE ISRAEL, from

GARY PETERS, from myself, from ELIJAH CUMMINGS, from many, many others—and coming forward swiftly with this bill that would tax at 90 percent. The remaining 10 percent would probably be taxed by States and cities.

If a company receives over \$5 billion of taxpayers' money, and anyone earning over \$250,000, they would be subject to this tax. So it moves the money back to the American taxpayer.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATOURETTE).

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

Mr. LATOURETTE. Mr. Speaker, I'm shocked at the shock. I cannot believe that we are here and people are shocked. Every person—or, I don't want to offend anybody, but almost every person on the other side of the aisle—voted for the stimulus bill that had the provision in that protected, authorized, and allowed these bonuses. And today, they're shocked.

When Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden, they were then pictured with fig leaves. The bill they want to bring today isn't a fig leaf, it's a fig tree.

Now, Ross Perot, when he ran for President in 1992, he talked about the giant sucking sound. Well, today there is another giant sucking sound going on in Washington, D.C., and that's the tightening of sphincters on both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue as people are having to explain who put into the stimulus bill this provision of law. And specifically, it's title VII, section 111, paragraph 3(i), that basically said that the bonuses that were paid out that people are shocked about today were protected and would not be touched.

Now, I think people have to man up around here and admit responsibility. Mr. Speaker, how much more time do I have?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Ohio has 1½ minutes remaining.

Mr. LATOURETTE. I am happy to yield my 1½ minutes to anybody on the other side of the aisle who can tell us who was in the room, who took out the Wyden-Snowe amendment that prohibited this executive compensation and inserted section 111, subparagraph 3(i). Anybody?

Who did it? Was it some staffer? We see a Senator on the other side of the Capitol blaming it on the Treasury Secretary. We see the Treasury Secretary blaming the Senate. And the last time I checked, the Secretary of the Treasury doesn't have legislative authority. He didn't write it. Who wrote it?

What I do know is that we told you, how can you give us 90 minutes to read a piece of legislation that's over a thousand pages long? You said, well, who needs to read the legislation? Well, apparently, today, when the chickens have come home to roost, and we have

read the legislation and the Democratic majority and the Democratic administration authorized AIG employees—73 of them—to get over a million dollars, today they're embarrassed.

□ 1030

And their response? It's a typical Democratic response: Let's tax people.

It's unconstitutional what they want to do; it's wrong what they want to do. And if we let the majority of this House that does not believe in transparency, that made us vote on a bill after giving us 90 minutes to read it, that is now embarrassed by the firestorm that's been created and the finger pointing that they're now engaging in, we shouldn't be here.

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

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Michigan (Mr. MCCOTTER).

Mr. MCCOTTER. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I too am shocked at the shock. When the stimulus bill came through the House, there were warnings from the minority party that we did not have time to read it, that we would find in that bill things that would be egregious and outrage the sensibilities of the American people.

But I will give credit where credit is due. It is, in fact, in this part a stimulus bill, for it stimulated the greed of the bonus babies at AIG because it protected and approved taxpayer-funded bonuses to that bailed-out company.

Facts are hard things to disprove. Every single Democrat in this House that voted for that bill voted to approve and protect those AIG bonuses. Every single Democrat in the Senate that voted for that stimulus bill, along with three Republican Senators, voted to approve and protect those AIG bonuses. The President of the United States signed into law the protection and approval of those AIG bonuses that they now find so repugnant now that the American people know what was done.

In my mind, this was part of a deliberate strategy to keep the employees at AIG who had broken the bank there to fix the mess that they had made. They knew that this Congress would not go alone with the executive bonuses being paid to bail out companies. They had to protect them with this amendment. It was dropped in in the dead of night.

If you are shocked, be shocked at the Members of your own party or administration that put it in and be shocked that we will now pass a bill of attainder that is unconstitutional to try to cover our, shall we say, tracks on this matter.

Here is the sad reality of where we are today. In a time of crisis, they passed the Wall Street bailout. The nightmarish prognostications of myself and others have been exceeded. Now what we find is an attempt to cover

one's tracks with another bill in a time of crisis that will leave no one, no one, safe from the hand of the taxman when the politicians come to cover their tracks at your expense.

The public deserves better. The public deserves transparency. We cannot fail them again.

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

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE).

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, a recent headline read "AIG is a P.I.G." And that's exactly the way that most Americans feel.

The TARP bill, however ill-thought out, was intended to slow the bleeding of our economy. Instead, that money is being used to line the pockets of the very crooks that drew the first blood. You know it and I know it and the American people know it.

However, what the American people do not know is who put that provision in the economic stimulus bill to ensure AIG's ability to pay out these outrageous bonuses. I don't know the answer to that. Was it Senator DODD? Well, just yesterday he said, no, he did it at the behest of the Obama White House. We need to remember this. The American people deserve to know who knew what, when they knew it.

We all agree that the fat cats at AIG shouldn't be rewarded for their irresponsible actions, and we'll take care of that today. But there are bigger questions.

This Member from Florida voted against the stimulus bill. However, most Democrats on the other side voted for the stimulus bill. And it's amazing that now they are so concerned and so shocked about a provision that was put in the bill that they fostered that never went through the Ways and Means Committee, on which I serve. We held a very brief briefing on it, but we did not get to vote on it. We did not get to put any amendments onto it.

I would at this point yield to the gentlewoman handling the bill on the other side, Ms. PINGREE, to ask her, who had the opportunity to vote against it, why she didn't.

Ms. PINGREE of Maine. Thank you very much for yielding.

I want to remind my colleagues on the other side of the aisle that we are here at this moment to pass the rule to allow us to fix this situation.

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Reclaiming my time, I don't believe that the gentlewoman responded to the question.

We're here today to remedy something that you had the opportunity to vote against, you and your colleagues had the opportunity to vote against. That language was in there.

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

Ms. PINGREE of Maine. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I wasn't here. Just to remind you, although I'm happy to be here to manage this bill, I was not here when many Members of the House voted on that particular bill. But I do want to say all of us in this Chamber had the opportunity to vote on the conditions on the TARP to make sure we dealt with things like executive compensation, and many of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, in fact, most of them, refused to vote in favor of those conditions. So we have had those opportunities to do that over time.

I do agree it should be further investigated exactly how things happened here. We are in one of the most tumultuous times in our economy than any of us have ever faced or previous generations have faced. But I personally voted in favor of those conditions of the TARP. And I do find it a little disingenuous to find many of my new colleagues, whom I am just getting to know, so anxious to talk about executive compensation, capping executive compensation, looking at this, when it was an issue that only probably weeks or months ago they wouldn't have gone near with a 10-foot pole. In fact, they wouldn't even have discussed this. They would have said leave business to itself, we're not going to get involved in this particular issue. This is an issue that has concerned me and my constituents back in my home State for a long time. I was proud to vote in favor of the conditions of the TARP.

And I want to remind my colleagues again we are here today to allow this rule to come to the floor so that we can have full debate on all of the opportunities afforded to us in this bill and this will be with us in only moments as soon as we vote in favor of this rule.

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

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, before I yield, let me say that what Ms. BROWN-WAITE was talking about was the \$800 billion so-called stimulus package. In that legislation was the authorization for these bonuses to AIG. And my understanding is that all of the colleagues on the other side of the aisle voted for that stimulus package. So that's for the record.

And I would urge my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to urge their leadership to take processes seriously. I remember when, that week of the stimulus package, the so-called stimulus package with \$800 billion, the House unanimously voted for a 48-hour period for everybody to be able to see what was in that package, and yet the majority leadership ignored the unanimous view of the House.

So I would urge my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to tell their leadership, please, pay attention to the will of the House, especially and including on process, because we now see that when process is abused, things make it

into legislation that later embarrasses those who vote for it.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished Member from Texas (Mr. PAUL).

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

Mr. PAUL. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to this rule as well as the bill because of the lack of need for this and the disgrace that this has brought upon us.

Yesterday, for instance, the Federal Reserve met and they came out and announced that they would create new money to the tune of \$1.25 trillion. The dollar promptly went down 3 percent, and today it went down another 1.5 percent. And today on emergency legislation, we're going to deal with \$165 million worth of bonuses, which obviously should have never been given. But who's responsible for this? It's the Congress and the President, who signed this.

So this is a distraction. This is an outrage so everybody can go home that voted for this bill and say, look, I am clamping down on this \$165 million but I don't care about the previous \$5 trillion the Fed created and the \$1.25 trillion they created yesterday.

Think of the loss in purchasing power in less than 24 hours. And we think that we can solve this problem. We first appropriate, unconstitutionally, \$350 billion. We give it to the Treasury. We have no strings attached. And then you have an unintended consequence; so we express this outrage. And at the same time, what do we do? We come along and we now propose that we pass a bill of attainder. So we do things that are unconstitutional. They have an unintended consequence. So what is our solution? To further undermine the Constitution.

A line should be drawn in the sand. Let's quit appropriating funds in an unconstitutional manner. Let's quit bankrupting this country. Let's quit destroying our dollar.

If you really want to do something, you ought to consider H.R. 1207, which would monitor and make the Fed answer questions. I understand the Fed and the Treasury were involved in a lot of these antics, and yet the Fed is not even required to answer any questions.

So it's about time we have an open book about the Federal Reserve and solve some of these problems.

Ms. PINGREE of Maine. Mr. Speaker, just in a quick answer to my good colleague from the Rules Committee, Mr. DIAZ-BALART, I was proud to vote in favor of this stimulus bill and very happy to vote for things that are helping my district at this very moment around health care and jobs and road construction and things that are desperately needed in my State.

Mr. Speaker, at this time I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. I want to thank the distinguished gentlewoman from Colorado for her leadership, and it's a pleasure to be on the floor with her today. Let me as well thank the Speaker for the opportunity to educate the American public and to dialogue with my colleagues.

I think it's important to note that about 1.1 or 3 trillion of the debt that we are facing is the result of the past administration. We are now climbing a very difficult mountain because of the enormous amount of irresponsibility that occurred. Today we are trying to fix problems that were contractually based, already existing. And certainly we recognize that we have a combination of a deficit, we have an increasing unemployment rate, and we have an important challenge of fixing the collapsed financial markets.

Everybody has heard of AIG. They finance and insure almost every aspect of our lives. And it was this leadership that focused on the recovery of providing stimulus dollars to our community. It was this leadership that infused into the stimulus package unemployment benefits to extend to hard-working Americans. And certainly it is this leadership that intends to fix this debacle. We will do it together. We will ensure that the moneys that were given to those, either unjustly or unfairly, are returned to the American public.

I don't like the format that we are dealt or the cards that we are dealt. I don't like the idea that we were told that these were existing contracts, that these were retention bonuses.

But now as the transparency opens up, good news. The American people, all of us, can see the structures of capitalism that we'd like to change. But we do believe in Americans being able to recover their investments. We want small businesses to survive. We believe in a capitalistic system. But it has to be fixed. Today is the day we fix it and provide the return of taxpayer dollars.

I am supporting the underlying rule because it is a sense of urgency now. And what we are doing is giving the opportunity to give money back.

I'm a lawyer. I realize that this may be subjected to constitutional challenge and/or the courts, but you know? I'm prepared to battle in the courts. Why? Because they look at issues of equity. What does equity mean? It means who's in here with unclean hands, and if there is a situation where they are taking Federal money, such as AIG, and all of a sudden they give retention bonuses, our courts will look at this legislation and say it is fair to give the money back to the American people because the circumstances have changed. So I'd rather take the chance of going forward on your behalf. And I am grateful to the leadership for allowing us to debate legislation that will help return the money.

We also protect those recipients. If you are making under \$250,000, we do not take that money back.

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

□ 1045

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from California (Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN).

Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, facts are inconvenient things and the United States Constitution is an inconvenient truth at times, particularly when Congress wants to show it's upset about something it already did.

Here are the facts. In the stimulus package, an amendment was adopted that the majority put in, the majority voted for, stating that provisions in the TARP and in the stimulus bills that limited compensation payments would not apply to "any bonus payment required to be paid pursuant to a written employment contract executed on or before February 11, 2009."

It was written specifically to protect the very bonuses that we are talking about here today. So now we are asking, how do we undo what we did? And the majority has brought to us a bill that doesn't recognize the truth of the Constitution.

There is something called a bill of attainder. You cannot punish a group because you don't like them. You can't have them treated more onerously than somebody else without a trial.

Now, that's an unfortunate truth that we have to deal with. How can we deal with this? Yesterday in Judiciary Committee, applying bankruptcy principles, we had an alternative. But that's not here on the floor today, because that's arguably constitutional. This is to get headlines to show that we are outraged.

But let me tell you, if we overturn the Constitution to show our outrage, no single American is safe. Because in the future what we will do is say we have a precedent that when we have an unpopular group, when we have a group that deserves some punishment, we won't go through the real laws, what we will do is we will pass a new tax law with confiscatory rates and say we have done it for the American people.

Well, if you do that, you are tearing up the Constitution. I didn't come here to tear up the Constitution to undo something that the majority did just a few weeks ago. We are better than that. We need to protect our Constitution.

Ms. PINGREE of Maine. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts and my colleague on the Rules Committee, Mr. MCGOVERN.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, we are not tearing up the Constitution here, we are responding to bad behavior. We are telling corporate America that we are not going to bail them out, our financial institutions. We are not going

to bail them out and let them do what AIG just did.

The American people are outraged, and rightly so, at the news that insurance giant AIG has given large bonuses to some of its employees. It is outrageous that a company that is being bailed out by the American people is providing bonuses to the people who dealt in these exotic financial instruments. Those employees made bad bets, and now the American people are paying the tab.

Mr. Speaker, not many of my constituents are getting so-called retention bonuses these days, and I can tell you that. They are not sure if they are going to wake up tomorrow with a job.

In Fall River, the unemployment rate is 16 percent. The city is being forced to lay off police officers and firefighters. Food banks are at their capacity, and they are being asked to pony up so-called retention bonuses for the people who got us into this mess? It is absolutely nuts.

Now I know that the CEO of AIG said yesterday that he has asked the people who have received these bonuses to give them back, and that's great. But I am afraid we can't simply rely on their good-hearted generosity. I understand, and I support the need to ensure the stability of the American banking system.

We need to get the credit flowing again. We need to make sure that people have access to mortgages and car loans and student loans. We need to make sure that small businesses have access to credit.

But we also need to make sure that bad behavior isn't rewarded with taxpayer money, and that's what this bill is all about. And as President Obama has rightly said, we must also put in place the appropriate rules and regulations going forward so that this kind of financial collapse never happens again.

Mr. Speaker, we need to get this right. We inherited a lousy economy from the previous administration, and we are in a position now where we need to help us support our financial institutions, but we need to make sure that we do so in a way that doesn't allow this kind of bad behavior to continue.

I applaud Speaker PELOSI and the leadership for bringing this bill to the floor. I urge my colleagues to support the rule and the underlying bill.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER).

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

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, our distinguished former colleague, the former chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, Bill Archer, always provided us with a great directive. He said here in this institution we should follow the Hippocratic Oath, that being to do no harm.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we know full well that the stimulus package had no Republican support, and many Republicans were maligned for having just

said “no.” And we all know very well, Democrats, Republicans alike know that we as Republicans came forward with a bold, robust, strong stimulus package ourselves, but they said we were just the Party of No.

Well, the fact of the matter is, again we offered a viable alternative. But we know very well that rushing as we did to this stimulus package is what has led to the challenge that our friends on the other side of the aisle are attempting to clean up today. A great deal of harm has been done and this, Mr. Speaker, is just one tiny example.

Over in the visitor’s center right now a hearing is being held by our Economic Stimulus Working Group, and testimony was just provided by a man called Mike Stevens of Action Printing from Lubbock, Texas. He was talking about the challenge of trying to get a printing press, and he said that only those banks that did not accept TARP monies had the flexibility to get the credit that he needed to purchase his printing press.

Mr. Speaker, if that example does not underscore, again, that the reach of government into our lives, trying to own companies and engage in this kind of activity is jeopardizing the potential for economic recovery, I believe that it is an absolute mistake for us to be going down this road. And I think those of us who stood up in opposition to this stimulus package have, in fact, had the statement made very, very clear.

Ms. PINGREE of Maine. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas, a Member of the Ways and Means Committee, Mr. DOGGETT.

Mr. DOGGETT. AIG—It has become shorthand for “Arrogant, Irresponsible Greed.” The big difference between the AIG insurance bootleggers and Ponzi felon Bernie Madoff is Madoff hasn’t asked for a bailout yet, although taxpayers are providing him public housing in prison.

Of course, we wouldn’t need to react so swiftly today about these outrageous bonuses if more people had been willing to speak out, not in January, but last September, when the Bush bailout provided almost \$1 trillion on unconditional terms. So many here accepted it, hook, line and sinker. Some of us urged last September the dangers of a bailout with no effective limitation on executive compensation, or on compelling taxpayers to bail out the rest of the world.

Well, today’s bill is very important in restoring Eisenhower-level taxes to those who took these bailouts. We need to ensure that it gets to the bonuses paid to foreign AIG employees. We need to question why this bailout helped AIG provide 20 European banks almost \$60 billion, without asking them to sacrifice one red cent.

The same arrogance and indifference to the struggles of American families that necessitate today’s bill, means that some of the most creative people in the world are already working to

find ways around the bill. They will use the same creativity they have employed to dodge their tax responsibilities by going to offshore tax havens, and creating subsidiaries, and other creative means that we need to guard against in this legislation.

Meaningful reform means getting behind thoroughly crafted legislation that returns accountability, transparency, responsibility, and the rule of law to markets that haven’t had the rule of law for the last 8 years.

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

Ms. PINGREE of Maine. I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. DOGGETT. Ever since the Bush Administration insisted taxpayers fund a near bottomless bailout, the problem has been battling the mindset that some folks are special—they are above responsibility for their actions, above any public accountability.

Today’s legislation is important. It has been swift. It is an overdue step that Congress needs to take, but it must be the first step, not the last.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, no more blaming Bush. Mr. DODD said that it’s the Obama administration that asked them to authorize these bonuses.

I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentlewoman from North Carolina, Dr. FOX.

Ms. FOX. Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by submitting for the record the vote record for the stimulus bill, which included the provision for the AIG bonuses that the administration pushed for, showing that the gentlelady from Maine, who said earlier that she had not voted for these bonuses, when she told the gentleman from Florida she didn’t vote it.

HOUSE ROLL CALL VOTE 70, FEB. 13, 2009
YEAS (246)

Republicans (0).

Democrats (246): Abercrombie (HI-01), Ackerman (NY-05), Adler (NJ-03), Altmire (PA-04), Andrews (NJ-01), Arcuri (NY-24), Baca (CA-43), Baird (WA-03), Baldwin (WI-02), Barrow (GA-12), Bean (IL-08), Becerra (CA-31), Berkley (NV-01), Berman (CA-28), Berry (AR-01), Bishop, S. (GA-02), Bishop, T. (NY-01), Blumenauer (OR-03), Boccieri (OH-16), Boren (OK-02), Boswell (IA-03), Boucher (VA-09), Boyd, A. (FL-02), Brady, R. (PA-01), Braley (IA-01), Brown, C. (FL-03), Butterfield (NC-01), Capps (CA-23), Capuano (MA-08), Cardoza (CA-18), Carnahan (MO-03), Carney (PA-10), Carson, A. (IN-07), Castor (FL-11), Chandler (KY-06), Childers (MS-01), Clarke (NY-11), Clay (MO-01), Cleaver (MO-05), Cohen (TN-09), Connolly (VA-11), Conyers (MI-14), Cooper (TN-05), Costa (CA-20), Costello (IL-12), Courtney (CT-02), Crowley (NY-07), Cuellar (TX-28), Cummings (MD-07), Dahlkemper (PA-03), Davis, A. (AL-07), Davis, D. (IL-07), Davis, L. (TN-04), Davis, S. (CA-53), DeGette (CO-01), Delahunt (MA-10), DeLauro (CT-03), Dicks (WA-06), Dingell (MI-15), Doggett (TX-25), Donnelly (IN-02), Doyle (PA-14), Driehaus (OH-01), Edwards, C. (TX-17), Edwards, D. (MD-04), Ellison (MN-05), Ellsworth (IN-08), Engel (NY-17), Eshoo (CA-14), Etheridge (NC-02), Farr (CA-17), Fattah (PA-02), Filner (CA-51), Foster (IL-14), Frank, B. (MA-04), Fudge (OH-11), Giffords (AZ-08), Gonzalez (TX-20), Gordon (TN-

06), Grayson (FL-08), Green, A. (TX-09), Green, G. (TX-29), Grijalva (AZ-07), Gutierrez (IL-04), Hall, J. (NY-19), Halvorson (IL-11), Hare (IL-17), Harman (CA-36), Hastings, A. (FL-23), Heinrich (NM-01), Herseth Sandlin (SD-AL), Higgins (NY-27), Hill (IN-09), Himes (CT-04), Hinchey (NY-22), Hinojosa (TX-15), Hirono (HI-02), Hodes (NH-02), Holden (PA-17), Holt (NJ-12), Honda (CA-15), Hoyer (MD-05), Inslee (WA-01), Israel (NY-02), Jackson, J. (IL-02), Jackson Lee (TX-18), Johnson, E. (TX-30), Johnson, H. (GA-04), Kagen (WI-08), Kanjorski (PA-11), Kaptur (OH-09), Kennedy, P. (RI-01), Kildee (MI-05), Kilpatrick (MI-13), Kilroy (OH-15), Kind (WI-03), Kirkpatrick (AZ-01), Kissell (NC-08), Klein, R. (FL-22), Kosmas (FL-24), Kratovil (MD-01), Kucinich (OH-10), Langevin (RI-02), Larsen, R. (WA-02), Larson, J. (CT-01), Lee (CA-09), Levin, S. (MI-12), Lewis, John (GA-05), Loebsock (IA-02), Lofgren (CA-16), Lowey (NY-18), Lujan (NM-03), Lynch (MA-09), Maffei (NY-25), Maloney (NY-14), Markey, B. (CO-04), Markey, E. (MA-07), Marshall (GA-08), Massa (NY-29), Matheson (UT-02), Matsui (CA-05), McCarthy, C. (NY-04), McCollum (MN-04), McDermott (WA-07), McGovern (MA-03), McIntyre (NC-07), McMahon (NY-13), McNeerney (CA-11), Meek, K. (FL-17), Meeks, G. (NY-06), Melancon (LA-03), Michaud (ME-02), Miller, B. (NC-13), Miller, George (CA-07), Mitchell (AZ-05), Mollohan (WV-01), Moore, D. (KS-03), Moore, G. (WI-04), Moran, James (VA-08), Murphy, C. (CT-05), Murphy, P. (PA-08), Murtha (PA-12), Nadler (NY-08), Napolitano (CA-38), Neal (MA-02), Nye (VA-02), Oberstar (MN-08), Obey (WI-07), Olver (MA-01), Ortiz (TX-27), Pallone (NJ-06), Pascrell (NJ-08), Pastor (AZ-04), Payne (NJ-10), Pelosi (CA-08), Perlmutter (CO-07), Perriello (VA-05), Peters (MI-09), Pingree (ME-01), Polis (CO-02), Pomeroy (ND-AL), Price, D. (NC-04), Rahall (WV-03), Rangel (NY-15), Reyes (TX-16), Richardson (CA-37), Rodriguez (TX-23), Ross (AR-04), Rothman (NJ-09), Roybal-Allard (CA-34), Ruppertsberger (MD-02), Rush (IL-01), Ryan, T. (OH-17), Salazar, J. (CO-03), Sanchez, Linda (CA-39), Sanchez, Loretta (CA-47), Sarbanes (MD-03), Schakowsky (IL-09), Schauer (MI-07), Schiff (CA-29), Schrader (OR-05), Schwartz (PA-13), Scott, D. (GA-13), Scott, R. (VA-03), Serrano (NY-16), Sestak (PA-07), Shea-Porter (NH-01), Sherman (CA-27), Sires (NJ-13), Skelton (MO-04), Slaughter (NY-28), Smith, Adam (WA-09), Snyder (AR-02), Solis (CA-32), Space (OH-18), Speier (CA-12), Spratt (SC-05), Stark (CA-13), Stupak (MI-01), Sutton (OH-13), Tanner (TN-08), Tauscher (CA-10), Teague (NM-02), Thompson, B. (MS-02), Thompson, M. (CA-01), Tierney (MA-06), Titus (NV-03), Tonko (NY-21), Towns (NY-10), Tsongas (MA-05), Van Hollen (MD-08), Velazquez (NY-12), Visclosky (IN-01), Walz (MN-01), Wasserman Schultz (FL-20), Waters (CA-35), Watson (CA-33), Watt (NC-12), Waxman (CA-30), Weiner (NY-09), Welch (VT-AL), Wexler (FL-19), Wilson, Charlie (OH-06), Woolsey (CA-06), Wu (OR-01), Yarmuth (KY-03).

NAYS (183)

Republicans (176): Aderholt (AL-04), Akin (MO-02), Alexander, R. (LA-05), Austria (OH-07), Bachmann (MN-06), Bachus, S. (AL-06), Barrett (SC-03), Bartlett (MD-06), Barton (TX-06), Biggert (IL-13), Bilbray (CA-50), Bilirakis (FL-09), Bishop, R. (UT-01), Blackburn (TN-07), Blunt (MO-07), Boehner (OH-08), Bonner (AL-01), Bono Mack (CA-45), Boozman (AR-03), Boustany (LA-07), Brady, K. (TX-08), Broun (GA-10), Brown, H. (SC-01), Brown-Waite, G. (FL-05), Buchanan (FL-13), Burgess (TX-26), Burton (IN-05), Buyer (IN-04), Calvert (CA-44), Camp (MI-04), Cantor (VA-07), Cao (LA-02), Capito (WV

0902), Carter (TX-31), Cassidy (LA-06), Castle (DE-AL), Chaffetz (UT-03), Coble (NC-06), Coffman (CO-06), Cole (OK-04), Conaway (TX-11), Crenshaw (FL-04), Culberson (TX-07), Davis, G. (KY-04), Deal (GA-09), Dent (PA-15), Diaz-Balart, L. (FL-21), Diaz-Balart, M. (FL-25), Dreier (CA-26), Duncan (TN-02), Ehlers (MI-03), Emerson (MO-08), Fallin (OK-05), Flake (AZ-06), Fleming (LA-04), Forbes (VA-04), Fortenberry (NE-01), Foxx (NC-05), Franks, T. (AZ-02), Frelinghuysen (NJ-11), Gallegly (CA-24), Garrett (NJ-05), Gerlach (PA-06), Gingrey (GA-11), Gohmert (TX-01), Goodlatte (VA-06), Granger (TX-12), Graves (MO-06), Guthrie (KY-02), Hall, R. (TX-04), Harper (MS-03), Hastings, D. (WA-04), Heller (NV-02), Hensarling (TX-05), Hergert (CA-02), Hoekstra (MI-02), Hunter (CA-52), Inglis (SC-04), Issa (CA-49), Jenkins (KS-02), Johnson, S. (TX-03), Johnson, Timothy (IL-15), Jones, W. (NC-03), Jordan (OH-04), King, P. (NY-03), King, S. (IA-05), Kingston (GA-01), Kirk (IL-10), Kline, J. (MN-02), Lamborn (CO-05), Lance (NJ-07), Latham (IA-04), LaTourette (OH-14), Latta (OH-05), Lewis, Jerry (CA-41), Linder (GA-07), LoBiondo (NJ-02), Lucas (OK-03), Luetkemeyer (MO-09), Lummis (WY-AL), Lungren (CA-03), Mack (FL-14), Manzullo (IL-16), Marchant (TX-24), McCarthy, K. (CA-22), McCaul (TX-10), McClintock (CA-04), McCotter (MI-11), McHenry (NC-10), McHugh (NY-23), McKeon (CA-25), McMorris Rodgers (WA-05), Mica (FL-07), Miller, C. (MI-10), Miller, Gary (CA-42), Miller, J. (FL-01), Moran, Jerry (KS-01), Murphy, T. (PA-18), Myrick (NC-09), Neugebauer (TX-19), Nunes (CA-21), Olson (TX-22), Paul (TX-14), Paulsen (MN-03), Pence (IN-06), Petri (WI-06), Pitts (PA-16), Plaits (PA-19), Poe (TX-02), Posey (FL-15), Price, T. (GA-06), Putnam (FL-12), Radanovich (CA-19), Rehberg (MT-AL), Reichert (WA-08), Roe (TN-01), Rogers, H. (KY-05), Rogers, Mike (MI-08), Rogers, Mike D. (AL-03), Rohrabacher (CA-46), Rooney (FL-16), Roskam (IL-06), Ros-Lehtinen (FL-18), Royce (CA-40), Ryan, P. (WI-01), Scalise (LA-01), Schmidt (OH-02), Schock (IL-18), Sensenbrenner (WI-05), Sessions, P. (TX-32), Shadegg (AZ-03), Shimkus (IL-19), Shuster (PA-09), Simpson (ID-02), Smith, Adrian (NE-03), Smith, C. (NJ-04), Smith, L. (TX-21), Souder (IN-03), Stearns (FL-06), Sullivan (OK-01), Terry (NE-02), Thompson, G. (PA-05), Thornberry (TX-13), Tiahrt (KS-04), Tiberi (OH-12), Turner (OH-03), Upton (MI-06), Walden (OR-02), Wamp (TN-03), Westmoreland (GA-03), Whitfield (KY-01), Wilson, J. (SC-02), Wittman (VA-01), Wolf (VA-10), Young, C.W. (FL-10), Young, D. (AK-AL).

Democrats (7): Bright (AL-02), DeFazio (OR-04), Griffith (AL-05), Minnick (ID-01), Peterson (MN-07), Shuler (NC-11), Taylor (MS-04).

NOT VOTING (4)

Republicans (2): Campbell (CA-48), Lee, C. (NY-26).

Democrats (2): Clyburn (SC-06), Lipinski (IL-03) P.

Mr. Speaker, this rushed legislation is coming from the same people who threw together the final stimulus bill in the dead of night and gave us over 12 hours to read over 1,000 pages, the same people who drafted the stimulus bill containing a provision that gave the green light to these \$1 million bonuses. They have never learned the expression "Act in haste, repent at leisure."

It's important to note that the same majority, Democrat majority that's expressing outrage over these AIG bonuses—rightly expressing outrage, I might add—is the same majority that voted overwhelmingly for the so-called stimulus that paved the way for these bonuses.

Let's take a measured approach. Unlike the approach that President Bush took on the bailout-panic last fall, unlike the stimulus frenzy last month that put us where we are today, we can recoup this money in a constitutional manner. In fact, Republicans have a bill that will allow us to do that, but they will not let us vote on that bill.

Now, let me say, also, that we got a letter, or the leadership of this House got a letter, dated January 12, 2009, from Mr. Summers, Dr. Summers, saying, that, he "will ask his Department of Treasury to put in place strict and sensible conditions on CEO compensation and dividend payments until taxpayers get their money back. We will ensure that resources are directed to increasing lending and preventing new financial crises and not to enriching shareholders and executives."

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

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. I yield the gentlewoman an additional 15 seconds.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. MCGOVERN, another Member of the Rules Committee, said, "The statement by the Obama administration, the statement by Larry Summers, is all very encouraging. It demonstrates a real appreciation of what average people are going through."

They really understand average people in this country.

This bill unconstitutionally gets, back 1/1000th—that's one one thousandth of the bailout cash that AIG has gotten. We need to get all of it back—all \$170 billion. We need a bailout exit strategy. And passing unconstitutional laws is not an exit strategy.

Ms. PINGREE of Maine. Mr. Speaker, I do want to thank the gentlelady from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for bringing in my voting record and remind her that I was very proud to vote for the stimulus or recovery package, whichever we choose to call it, and have already stated that on the record.

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

Mr. SHERMAN. Let me set the record straight, particularly with regard to the comments of Mr. DREIER from California. The TARP bill is the one that provided the bailouts. It contained highly ineffectual, giant loophole-containing limits on executive compensation.

Not surprisingly, those provisions did not prevent the outrageous AIG bonuses, nor do they prevent million-dollar a month salaries. It is the TARP bill which should have limited and pretended to limit executive compensation to those who got money from the TARP bill. The gentleman from California voted for the TARP bill, as I understand it, I voted against it, twice.

Then in January we considered a bill that had little or nothing to do with the TARP bailout. It, thankfully, included some effort to control bonuses. That was in addition to the restrictions found in the TARP bill. It was a step in the right direction, but it was

not enough to stop AIG bonuses. To attack people for voting to make the TARP Program a little better, and to have those attacks come from somebody who voted for the TARP bill, seems just a little outrageous.

But what about the bill we are going to consider today? It's a good step, but it ain't going to get us where we need to go. Because the bill we will consider today allows for half-million-dollar a month salaries, million-dollar a month salaries, without any taxation, without any limitation, without any effect from this legislation, just as those million-dollar a month salaries were unaffected by the TARP bill and by the stimulus bill.

□ 1100

We need to come to this floor next week and improve the bill that I hope we pass today—to deal with all executive compensation, not just bonuses. Because if you think people are angry today at the AIG bonuses, you see how angry they get when we tell them we've solved the problem and then they find out some people at bailed-out firms are getting \$500,000 a month salaries. Because they couldn't get bonuses, they went to the employer and said, Well, better make it \$1 million a month.

We have got to deal with the entire compensation package.

The bill we'll consider today also allows unlimited commissions. Now, you could argue that maybe certain commissions shouldn't be limited. But if you don't define the word commission, you can be sure everybody on Wall Street will rename what would have been a bonus into a commission. And it will not be taxed under the bill we are going to deal with today.

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

Ms. PINGREE of Maine. I yield the gentleman 1 more minute.

Mr. SHERMAN. I thank the gentlelady. Finally, the bill we are going to deal with today deals only with executives of firms that have received capital infusions of over \$5 billion. That means that they got \$5 billion and they sold the Treasury their preferred stock.

Well, that's the way we did business last year. Now Treasury is about to stop buying preferred stock. They're going to start buying toxic assets.

The bill we'll consider today does not deal with those firms who sell \$5 billion, \$10 billion, \$50 billion worth of toxic assets to the U.S. government. So we have to deal with the bailed-out firms that get over \$5 billion, whether they get it for toxic assets or whether they get it for preferred stock.

We have to deal with salaries, we have to deal with commissions, we have to deal with Employee of the Week bonus payments or prize payments. We have to deal with all aspects

of compensation. Until then, our constituents will be justifiably skeptical.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE).

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. Speaker, it seems altogether appropriate that the President is appearing on the Jay Leno show tonight. The administration's response to the AIG debacle has been nothing short of a comedy routine all week long. And we in Congress have played Laurel to the administration's Hardy all week long.

What we are about to do with this legislation, however, is not a laughing matter. We are responding to our failure to adequately review the stimulus bill by passing a bill that we have spent even less time reviewing.

A cursory review of this legislation seems to reveal that it's nothing more than a bill of attainder—a measure that is clearly unconstitutional. Does that matter to anyone here?

Let me offer just one example of why we should subject this legislation to a bit more deliberation. We don't have sufficient money in the Treasury, nor can we responsibly borrow enough money to purchase the toxic assets currently on the balance sheets of our financial institutions. We are going to need a great deal of investment from the private sector to do that.

Who in the private sector, Mr. Speaker, seeing what we are doing here today, would put their own money at risk for the possibility of financial return if they know that Congress, with one day's notice, can pass legislation to tax 90 percent of it?

It's tough enough, Mr. Speaker, for government to control the commanding heights of the economy without riding a high horse while doing it.

Ms. PINGREE of Maine. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE).

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

Mr. PENCE. Last fall, like a majority of House Republicans, I opposed the Wall Street bailout because I feared we'd arrive at days like today, in part. House Republicans share the outrage of the American people that AIG would use taxpayer dollars to award executive bonuses during an economic crisis. But the Democratic bill brought to the floor today is constitutionally questionable. In its obviously transparent attempt to divert attention away from the truth, the Democrats in Congress and this administration made these bonus payments possible.

House Republicans believe the American people deserve 100 percent of their money back. House Republicans have proposed legislation that will deny AIG one more dime of bailout money until they have recovered all of the bonus payments from their employees.

Lastly, the American people deserve to know this whole outrage could have

been avoided. The truth is that it was a Democrat Senator from Oregon, RON WYDEN, who authored thoughtful legislation that would have banned executive bonuses included in the stimulus bill, and it was—late in the night, late in the process—removed.

Here's what he had to say about it. Senator WYDEN told the Associated Press, "The President goes out and says this is not acceptable, then some backroom deal gets cut and lets these things get paid out anyway.

"He said, 'I think it's unfortunate.' He said we could have had a well-targeted message 'which would have communicated how strongly the administration felt about blocking these executive bonuses,' but I wasn't able to convince them."

"Even Senator CHRIS DODD, the head of the conference committee for the stimulus bill said, 'I didn't negotiate with myself. I wasn't trying to change it on my own. The administration had expressed reservations. They asked for modifications.'"

The American people deserve to know that, thanks to the work of Senator RON WYDEN and Senator OLYMPIA SNOWE, we wouldn't be here today, because the stimulus bill would have banned these bonuses altogether. But that language was removed.

The American people deserve 100 percent of their money back. They deserve to know why House Democrats blocked efforts to ban executive bonuses. We deserve the truth.

Ms. PINGREE of Maine. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE).

Mr. ROYCE. The Democrats have actually controlled this Congress for over the last 2 years, and it was the Democrats who controlled the passage of the TARP legislation in the first place. I voted against that legislation.

But ABC News reported yesterday that "during late-night, closed-door negotiations for the House, Senate, and White House, a measure was stripped out of the stimulus bill that could have restricted these AIG bonuses. The Senate had approved the amendment to the stimulus bill aimed at restricting bonuses over \$100,000 that had been authored by OLYMPIA SNOWE and by RON WYDEN. Then, the provision was stripped out during the closed-door conference involving House and Senate leaders and the White House. Dodd's measure explicitly exempted bonuses agreed to prior to the passage of the stimulus bill."

Now, most of the Democratic Members voted for this on the House floor, all of the Republicans voted against it. That's the record.

We should vote "aye" on this bill. And the reason we should is because it's going to stop executives from coming here to take TARP funds from Washington. It's going to stop capitalists from being converted into quasi-so-

cialists. That's the reason we should vote "aye."

I brought an amendment to this floor in 2005 to try to prevent—with Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac—to try to regulate them for systemic risk, arguing that their over-leveraging as GSEs was going to cause bankruptcy and a financial collapse. It was voted down.

It was voted down, but this year those executives from Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, it was reported yesterday, they are going to get over \$1 billion in bonuses.

How do we stop every executive coming to this town to get TARP money and over-leveraging their firms and then the consequent bailout at cost to the taxpayers?

Well, we passed legislation removing their bonuses so that all of the time and effort that these business executives put into coming to D.C. is reversed.

When you take TARP money, when they do that, they have the full backing of the U.S. government behind them. So they can borrow money without market discipline and without limit, at a lower interest rate than their competitors, and drive them out of business, which is what AIG is doing right now to other smaller private sector businesses.

It's 80 percent owned by the government. Without that market discipline, what consequently happens, economists tell us—and this is exactly what happened with Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac as government-sponsored enterprises—they drive out their competition, they become larger and larger, they over-leverage, and then they collapse, requiring more in government infusions of capital into these institutions.

You have got to change the incentive structure. You have got to put up a firewall between government and the markets. You don't want these fellows down here with their lobbyists. You don't want these men and women, these executives down here trying to figure out ways to get the taxpayers to back them so that they can become quasi-GSEs, because the long-term consequence of becoming a government-sponsored enterprise is the same as what happened to Fannie and Freddie.

This is what economists have tried to explain to us. We finally have a method to distinguish between those in the private sector, those who are free-market businessmen, who are going to take risks, not with government money, and are going to make a salary and are going to pay bonuses to their executives, and those who decide that they want to be quasi-public in nature, that they want to be like Fannie and Freddie.

Why should they make bonuses of \$1 million a year this year for Fannie and Freddie? Why should they make twice as much as they made in bonuses last year? It is only because, unfortunately, my friends on the other side of the aisle did not listen to this argument on TARP funding.

Ms. PINGREE of Maine. Mr. Speaker I yield 2 minutes to a member of the Ways and Means Committee, the gentleman from North Dakota (Mr. POMEROY).

Mr. POMEROY. I thank the gentleman for yielding. Mr. Speaker, the people have spoken on the extraordinary issue of AIG lavishing fat bonuses on some of its executives. Indeed, some of the very people whose reckless actions destroyed this once great company. The people have said no. In fact, they've said: Hell no. And give us our money back.

This is not just another case of runaway corporate greed and arrogance, ripping off shareholders by excesses lavished around the executive suite. These bonuses represent a squandering of the people's money because it's the vast sums we have been forced to pour into this now pathetic company.

The bill before us is unlike any tax bill I have ever seen. But it reflects the strong feelings of our constituents and the bipartisan will of this body. We will not tolerate these actions. We are not going to wring our hands, shake our heads, look at our feet and mumble "Ain't it a shame."

Starting right here, right now, we are saying: No more. We are saying: Give us our money back. And we will not stop until we get it back.

The fact that we have to take this step at all is appalling to me. Have the recipients of these checks no shame at all? They failed in their work. They wrecked a corporate icon. They contributed mightily to the economic crash that has cost the Treasury \$170 billion so far. And they want to cash their bonus checks.

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

Ms. PINGREE of Maine. I yield another 30 seconds.

Mr. POMEROY. Let today's vote say loud and clear to those running to cash their ill-gotten checks: You disgust us. By any measure, you are disgraced, professional losers. By the way, give us our money back.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentlelady from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT).

Mrs. BIGGERT. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, let me be clear. We want the money back—the money that was used for executive bonuses.

But I rise today in opposition to this rule. Frankly, I find it incredibly disappointing how this Congress has handled the AIG situation. And now the majority is simply repeating the same mistakes that led us here.

As we all know, the 1,100-page stimulus package was made public in the dead of night, just hours before the vote. No one could have read it except those that crafted it behind closed doors. No committee hearings were held, no alternatives or amendments were permitted. And now we find another reason why the majority didn't want it exposed to close scrutiny.

Apparently the majority quietly stripped out language passed in the Senate that would have blocked these outrageous bonuses funded with taxpayer dollars.

And who is responsible? First, no one took responsibility or seemed to have any idea who did it. Then Senator DODD admitted that he stripped out the language at the behest of the administration.

Now Congress is making the same bad mistake by passing another piece of rushed legislation introduced in one day, and hasn't had the proper scrutiny.

□ 1115

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Minnesota, who has legislation filed and who has been working diligently on this issue, Mr. PAULSEN.

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I also agree that taxpayers deserve 100 percent of their money back. But, Mr. Speaker, I would urge our colleagues to vote "no" on the rule that is before us today.

Voting "no" on this rule today will allow us to consider the very common-sense proposal that we tried to bring up yesterday and now that the gentleman from Florida is trying to bring up once again today, a bipartisan proposal, actually, that would require not only that the bonuses get returned, have the Treasury Department return those bonuses, but, more importantly, put accountability in place so it never happens again. No more excuses. Requiring the Treasury Department to sign off on any future bonuses, requiring the Treasury Department to sign off on any future contracts regarding TARP legislation.

The bill that is being brought to the floor by the majority today was hastily written, as were provisions of the stimulus bill. It is covering the shoddy work that was done in the oversight of the TARP funds, the shoddy work that was put together in the stimulus bill, and it is covering up the shoddy work as well of government incompetence.

Mr. Speaker, let's have a vote for accountability by voting "no" on this provision so we can insert better bipartisan legislation.

Ms. PINGREE of Maine. Mr. Speaker, I am the last speaker for this side. I will reserve my time until the gentleman has closed for his side and yielded back his time.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am asking all Members to vote "no" on the previous question. It won't preclude consideration of the other suspension bills we expect to consider today, but it will give the administration another way to recover the taxpayer funds given in those outrageous bonuses to AIG, and it will also help prevent another bonus scandal, as Mr. PAULSEN, the author of the legislation that I wish would be able to be debated, has just explained.

So I urge a "no" vote on the previous question, really, to say enough is enough with regard not only with the scandalous misuse of taxpayer funds, but the abuse of the process by the majority; because on an issue like this, where there is outrage on both sides of the aisle, there should be no problem with discussion and debate and consideration of ideas from other Members, not just the office of the leadership here, the majority leadership.

And with regard to what we have heard about blaming the prior administration, it is going to be very interesting, Mr. Speaker, to see how long that lasts. I am sure they will try to make it last for 4 years, but how long will it be effective? Because the authorization for the bonuses was in the so-called stimulus package voted for by the majority.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to have the text of the amendment and extraneous material inserted into the RECORD immediately prior to the vote on the previous question.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. I again urge a "no" vote on the previous question, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. PINGREE of Maine. Mr. Speaker, I can be very brief in my close, and I thank all of the eloquent speakers from our side who have come to the floor to talk about this important issue and the importance of voting on it today.

Let me be clear, a "no" vote, a "no" vote on this, is to allow the executives at AIG to keep their bonuses.

Now, how many people have come before us today to say it is unconscionable to think that they would take taxpayers' dollars to fund a misguided scheme, and then be given bonuses by the taxpayers? It is unthinkable. A "no" vote here is unthinkable.

We have talked about a whole variety of things from each other's voting records to the constitutionality, to a whole range of issues that do and don't apply to what we are talking about right now, and that is to allow a rule to allow us to proceed with doing something about the executive bonuses at AIG.

How many people have come before us? How many constituents have we heard from who have said: You have got to do something about these bonuses. I am struggling. I am struggling to keep my business going. I am struggling to keep my home going. Numerous things we have all heard from all of our constituents that have said to us, do something, do it right now. That is what people are asking us, in this extreme difficult economy where people are struggling every day, where businesses are struggling, where in my district we are hearing a layoff notice almost every day. People are saying to us, it is time to do something. That is why we are here.

I urge a “yes” vote of my colleagues on the previous question and on the rule.

The material previously referred to by Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida is as follows:

AMENDMENT TO H. RES. 257, AS REPORTED OFFERED BY MR. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART OF FLORIDA

At the end of the resolution, insert the following new section:

SEC. 2. Immediately upon adoption of this resolution, without intervention of any motion or recess, the Speaker shall entertain a motion offered by the Minority Leader or his designee, that the House suspend the rules relating to the bill (H.R. 1577) to require the Secretary of the Treasury to pursue every legal means to stay or recoup certain incentive bonus payments and retention payments made by American International Group, Inc. to its executives and employees, and to require the Secretary’s approval of such payments by any financial institution who receives funds under title I of the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008. Clause 8(a) of rule XX shall not apply to such motion. A motion to adjourn shall not be in order during consideration of such motion.

(The information contained herein was provided by Democratic Minority on multiple occasions throughout the 109th Congress.)

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 Democratic majority agenda and a vote to allow the opposition, at least for the moment, to offer an alternative plan. It is a vote about what the House should be debating.

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

Because the vote today may look bad for the Democratic majority they will 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 definition of the previous question used in the Floor Procedures Manual published by the Rules Committee in the 109th Congress, (page 56). Here’s how the Rules Committee described the rule using information from Congressional Quarterly’s “American Congressional Dictionary”: “If the previous question is defeated, control of debate shifts

to the leading opposition member (usually the minority Floor Manager) who then manages an hour of debate and may offer a germane amendment to the pending business.”

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 Democratic majority’s agenda and allows those with alternative views the opportunity to offer an alternative plan.

Ms. PINGREE of Maine. I yield back the balance of my time and move the previous question on the resolution.

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

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

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

RAISING A QUESTION OF THE PRIVILEGES OF THE HOUSE

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to a question of the privileges of the House and offer the resolution previously noticed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the resolution.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 265

Whereas, Mr. Paul Magliocchetti, a former Appropriations Committee staffer, founded a prominent lobbying firm specializing in obtaining defense earmarks for its clients and whose offices—along with the home of the founder—were recently raided by the FBI.

Whereas, the lobbying firm has shuttered its political action committee and is scheduled to cease operations at the end of the month but, according to the New York Times, “not before leaving a detailed blueprint of how the political money churn works in Congress” and amid multiple press reports that its founder is the focus of a Justice Department investigation. (The New York Times, February 20, 2009)

Whereas, CQ Today noted that the firm has “charged \$107 million in lobbying fees from 2000 through 2008” and estimates of political giving by the raided firm have varied in the press, with The Hill reporting that the firm has given \$3.4 million to no less than 284 members of Congress. (CQ Today, March 12, 2009; The Hill, March 4, 2009)

Whereas, The Hill reported that Mr. Magliocchetti is “under investigation for [the firm’s] campaign donations,” the Washington Post highlighted the fact that federal

investigators are “focused on allegations” that he “may have reimbursed some of his staff to cover contributions made in their names . . .” and the New York Times noted that federal prosecutors are “looking into the possibility” that he “may have funneled bogus campaign contributions” to members of Congress. (The Hill, February 20, 2009; The Washington Post, February 14, 2009; The New York Times, February 11, 2009)

Whereas, Roll Call reported on “the suspicious pattern of giving established by two Floridians who joined [the firm’s] board of directors in 2006” and who, with “no previous political profile . . . made more than \$160,000 in campaign contributions over a three-year period” and “generally contributed the same amount to the same candidate on the same days.” (Roll Call, February 20, 2009)

Whereas, The Hill also reported that “the embattled defense lobbyist who led the FBI-raided [firm] has entered into a Florida-based business with two associates whose political donations have come into question” and is listed in corporate records as being an executive with them in a restaurant business. (The Hill, February 17, 2009)

Whereas, Roll Call also reported that it had located tens of thousands of dollars of donations linked to the firm that “are improperly reported in the FEC database.” (Roll Call, February 20, 2009)

Whereas, CQ Today recently reported that Mr. Magliocchetti and “nine of his relatives—two children, his daughter-in-law, his current wife, his ex-wife and his ex-wife’s parents, sister, and brother-in-law” provided “\$1.5 million in political contributions from 2000 through 2008 as the lobbyist’s now-embattled firm helped clients win billions of dollars in federal contracts,” with the majority of the family members contributing in excess of \$100,000 in that timeframe. (CQ Today, March 12, 2009)

Whereas, CQ Today also noted that “all but one of the family members were recorded as working for [the firm] in campaign finance reports, and most also were listed as having other employers” and with other occupations such as assistant ticket director for a Class A baseball team, a school teacher, a police sergeant, and a homemaker. (CQ Today, March 12, 2009)

Whereas, in addition to reports of allegations related to reimbursing employees and the concerning patterns of contributions of business associates and board members, ABC News reported that some former clients of the firm “have complained of being pressured by [the firm’s] lobbyists to write checks for politicians they either had no interest in or openly opposed.” (ABC News The Blotter, March 4, 2009)

Whereas, Roll Call has taken note of the timing of contributions from employees of Mr. Magliocchetti’s firm and its clients when it reported that they “have provided thousands of dollars worth of campaign contributions to key Members in close proximity to legislative activity, such as the deadline for earmark request letters or passage of a spending bill.” (Roll Call, March 3, 2009)

Whereas, reports of the firm’s success in obtaining earmarks for their clients are widespread, with CQ Today reporting that “104 House members got earmarks for projects sought by [clients of the firm] in the 2008 defense appropriations bills,” and that 87 percent of this bipartisan group of Members received campaign contributions from the raided firm. (CQ Today, February 19, 2009)

Whereas, clients of Mr. Magliocchetti’s firm received at least three hundred million dollars worth of earmarks in fiscal year 2009 appropriations legislation, including several that were approved even after news of the FBI raid and Justice Department investigation into the firm and its founder was well known.