In my district, the 10th District of Illinois, we've got 650 manufacturers, representing 80,000 jobs. It's the third largest district for manufacturing in our Nation. Forty-six thousand of those jobs rely on exports.

The President has said that he wants to double exports by 2014. We certainly want to help him in that process. For every billion dollars that we increase in exports, we create 6,250 jobs, according to the statistics. The Korean Free Trade Agreement alone would add $10 billion of GDP to our bottom line.

It is important—I would say critical—that we pass the pending free trade agreements with South Korea, Panama, and Colombia so we can expand our markets and create jobs here at home.

THE AMERICAN PEOPLE DON'T WANT IDEOLOGY

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

Mr. YARMUTH. Madam Speaker, nearly every economist in our country and leaders from both sides of the aisle agree: Defaulting on our debt would be disastrous to our economy, to middle class families, and to our most vulnerable citizens. Yet more than 60 of my Republicans colleagues have said they will not, under any circumstances, support a plan to raise the debt ceiling and prevent another economic crisis.

Since day one of this Congress, the Republican agenda has been driven by a reckless Tea Party ideology that ignores reality. Now, with the security of our economy and every American family on the line, they again choose ideology over reality.

But ideology doesn't pay the bills. Middle class families can't buy groceries with ideology. You can't pay for prescription drugs with it. Mortgage bankers don't accept ideology as payment, and neither do credit card companies. Ideology doesn't provide a safety net for our seniors who rely on Social Security and Medicare. And ideology won't pay our troops serving on the front lines.

No matter how many times they deny the consequences of default, the reality is not going to change. This blind adherence to an ideology is not leadership, and it's not what the American people want or desire.

DEFAULT EQUALS DISASTER

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

Mr. CARNEY. Our Nation is lurching towards an August 2 deadline to avoid defaulting on the national debt. If Congress doesn't act, the United States will face an economic calamity that could easily have been prevented.

If we don't raise the debt ceiling, the world will lose confidence in the U.S., and its credit rating will be downgraded from its current bullet-proof AAA grade. Interest rates will rise, which will slow the fragile economic recovery and risk pushing the economy back into recession. Higher interest rates on U.S. Treasuries would also seriously affect ordinary Americans. A default would force consumers to pay more for mortgages, car loans, and other borrowing. Losing our AAA credit rating will increase the government's interest payments on the national debt, making it even more difficult to get our fiscal house in order.

Let's face it. A default would be a financial disaster for the country. We can't afford it. But we shouldn't just raise the debt ceiling. We should use it as an opportunity for both sides to agree on a plan to reduce the deficit by $4 trillion over the next decade. The so-called Gang of Six has come forward with a bipartisan plan to do just that. It's comprehensive, balanced, and it's right for the country. It's not perfect but it's all we have.

It's time to do the right thing for the country.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 605

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to remove my name as a cosponsor from H.R. 605.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. EMERSON). Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Florida?

There was no objection.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1315, CONSUMER FINANCIAL PROTECTION SAFETY AND SOUNDNESS IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2011

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 358 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 358

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1315) to amend the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act to strengthen the review authority of the Financial Stability Oversight Council of regulations issued by the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and amendments specified in this section and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Financial Services. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. In lieu of the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Financial Services now printed in the bill, it shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of the Rules Committee Print dated July 14, 2011. That amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read. All points of order against that amendment in the nature of a substitute are waived. No amendment to that amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be in order except those printed in the report of the Committee on Rules. Each amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. All points of order against such amendments are waived. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. Any Member may demand a separate vote in the House on any amendment adopted in the Committee of the Whole to the bill or to the amendment in the nature of a substitute made in order as original text. 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. In the engrossment of H.R. 1315, the Clerk shall—

(a) add the text of H.R. 830, as passed by the House, as new matter at the end of H.R. 1315;

(b) conform the title of H.R. 1315 to reflect the addition of H.R. 830, as passed by the House, to the engrossment;

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

(d) conform provisions for short titles within the engrossment.

POINT OF ORDER

Ms. FUDGE. Madam Speaker, I raise a point of order against H. Res. 358 because the resolution violates section 426(a) of the Congressional Budget Act. The resolution contains a waiver of all points of order against consideration of the bill, which includes a waiver of section 425 of the Congressional Budget Act, which causes a violation of section 426(a).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from Ohio makes a point of order that the resolution violates section 426(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974.

The gentlewoman has met the threshold burden under the rule, and the gentlewoman from Ohio and a Member opposed each will control 10 minutes of debate on the question of consideration. Following debate, the Chair will put the question of consideration as the statutory means of disposing of the point of order.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Ohio.

Ms. FUDGE. Madam Speaker, I raise this point of order not necessarily out of concern for unfunded mandates, although there are likely some in the underlying bill, H.R. 1315, but because this bill will put consumers and the American economy at risk.

A year ago today, President Obama signed the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act into law. This law creates a strong Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, the CFPB, that will protect consumers, especially the poor and the most vulnerable, from unscrupulous practices in the financial industry.

The Dodd-Frank law levels the playing field. The CFPB has taken steps to protect Americans against abuses by the financial industry, like payday lenders and debt collectors, that we were unable to monitor before the passage of the law.

I oppose the underlying bill because it removes these protections. This bill, H.R. 1315, is designed to cripple the CFPB before it is up and running.

Voters across party lines solidly support the Wall Street reform law. The American people want safeguards to help the economy and protect them from deceptive financial practices and predatory products. By trying to weaken the CFPB, Republicans in Congress just confirm how out of touch they are with the concerns of the American people.

□ 1230

Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlelady from New York, YVETTE CLARKE.

Ms. CLARKE of New York. I thank my good friend from Ohio for the time.

Madam Speaker, the Republican majority would like the American people to believe that a near financial collapse never happened, never occurred. To hear the majority's narrative over the course of the 112th Congress, you would think that nothing is wrong with the economy that deregulation and tax cuts for multi-millionaires and billionaires can't solve.

What the Republican majority refuses to acknowledge in their revisionist narrative is that their tax cuts for multi-millionaires and billionaires helped lead our country from surplus into massive deficits.

The majority's revisionist narrative also omits the fact that years of deregulation and lax oversight of financial institutions is what caused the economic downturn we are struggling to fully recover from.

Madam Speaker, the near collapse of the national economy not only cost the American people billions of dollars in bailouts but also resulted in millions of Americans losing their jobs, their homes and life savings through no fault of their own.

The number one priority of the 112th Congress should be to continue the economic recovery work of the 111th Congress. The American people expect the other side to work with the President and congressional Democrats to put Americans back to work.

So I find it unbelievable, Madam Speaker, that, in the face of 9.2 percent unemployment and when millions of Americans are struggling simply to stay in their homes, the majority would declare war on the very agency that would prevent a similar financial crisis from ever happening again.

By decreasing accountability, muddling decision-making and starving it for funds, the Republican majority is threatening to turn the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau into a gridlocked agency that cannot possibly fulfill their mandate as a financial industry watchdog, leaving the American people once again vulnerable to the predatory lending that precipitated the financial collapse in the first place.

Madam Speaker, the 112th Congress has been in session for over 6 months, and we still have not had one comprehensive jobs bill, nor have we voted on one single bill that would help struggling homeowners stay in their homes. We have, unfortunately, been forced to vote to protect tax cuts for multi-millionaires and billionaires, we have voted to protect the profits of companies who ship jobs overseas, and we have voted on bills that undercut the social safety net for Americans at a time when the most vulnerable amongst us need it the most. In other words, Madam Speaker, we have wasted the American people's time.

If the Republican majority claims to speak for the American people, then perhaps they should listen to the American people, stop playing games and bring legislation to the floor that addresses the number one priority of the American people: jobs.

By bringing this bill to the floor, the Republican majority either doesn't remember the recent financial crisis or simply doesn't care about the hardships facing the American people.

I support the gentlewoman from Ohio in bringing this point of order.

Ms. FUDGE. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to my friend and colleague, the gentlelady from California, JACKIE SPEIER.

Ms. SPEIER. I thank my good friend from Ohio.

This is getting old. The majority knows it can't kill an idea whose time has come. So now they're trying to slow down the process, just like their friends in the banking industry who use tricks and traps to separate American families from their hard-earned money. This bill is nothing more than an attempt to turn the CFPB into the Center For Profits and Big Business.

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau will provide families a level playing field upon which to shop for the full range of financial products. Nothing is getting banned. Consumers can still choose to make bad decisions if they wish, but now they'll have the tools to be better informed through the process. Instead of mountains of mortgage documents, they'll get a simple-to-read one-page document that they can then use to answer crucial questions like, Is this something that I can afford? Is this the best deal that I can get?

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau is the most accountable regulatory body in the world. In fact, it has a whole slew of regulators watching and questioning everything it does. It is required to undergo an annual GAO report; have all enforcement actions subject to appeal; and be regulated, in turn, by every other agency on the Financial Stability Oversight Council. Simply put, the CFPB helps families hold on to the money they might otherwise give to the banks. And the banks hate that.

That is precisely why the majority has thrown this ridiculous bill together. Among other things, this legislation would require those regulating predatory lenders to stop if their actions threatened the company's ''safety and soundness.'' In other words, their profits.

We heard all about this issue when we banned unreasonable penalties on credit cards. At the time, the credit card companies said this would absolutely crush their model. Well, look what's happened. Are they still alive and well? You bet they are. But the truth is this legislation isn't really about any of that. No, this is about the only area where the majority has any kind of legislative record: legislative delay.

The anti-consumer bloc in this Congress is engaged in a legislative Ponzi scheme. They're helping Wall Street suck a few more dollars out of American families before the inevitable happens and the CFPB stands up. Every day politicians can stall the opening of the bureau, well, that's more profits.

Today, the CFPB is alive, and I want every American to look at this opportunity to call this number. This is a hotline available today for you to access if you've got problems with your credit cards; but you had better act now because the majority wants to shut it down.

Ms. FUDGE. Madam Speaker, how much time do I have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman has 2½ minutes.

Ms. FUDGE. I yield 1½ minutes to the gentlelady from New York, CAROLYN MALONEY.

Mrs. MALONEY. I thank my colleagues for raising this issue.

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau is needed. House Republicans have today officially launched their legislative effort to make sure these protections will never have the chance to do the job of protecting our consumers and safeguarding the larger economy. It is as if our friends across the aisle are blind to the painful lessons of the Great Recession. It's the group that says let's pretend the recession never happened. The Republican strategy to defang, defuse, and delay the consumer protection agency ignores critical issues that contributed both to the credit bubble and the financial meltdown.

Deceptive and misleading practices, predatory lending, unsafe credit standards—these practices cost Americans dearly. According to the Federal Reserve, between 2007 and the final quarter of 2009, United States household wealth fell by $16.4 trillion of the net worth, and that is terrible. That is a sum that would be more than enough to pay for the United States national debt. If the CFPB had been in place in 2001, we might have avoided this painful, disruptive economic downturn that has hurt our overall economy, our standing in the world, and our consumers. We must let the CFPB go into effect to protect our economy and protect our consumers.

I congratulate the gentlelady on her leadership.

Ms. FUDGE. Madam Speaker, in closing, this underlying bill, H.R. 1315, is trying to gut the reforms we fought for and won in the new Wall Street reform law. The CFPB is set to begin work today as the cop on the financial beat protecting American consumers and the economy from Wall Street greed.

Republicans want to delay, defund, and dismantle the Dodd-Frank law. Make no mistake, Madam Speaker: Republicans want to remove protections for consumers and investors. Republicans want to return to a time where consumers, investors, and the entire financial system are at risk.

I urge Members to vote ''no'' on this question of consideration.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SESSIONS. I claim time in opposition to the point of order and in favor of consideration of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas is recognized for up to 10 minutes.

Mr. SESSIONS. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The question before the House is, shall the House now consider H. Res. 358? That is really the question here.

□ 1240

While the resolution waives all points of order against consideration of the bill, the committee is not aware of any points of order. The waiver is simply made up in nature.

In fact, the Congressional Budget Office has issued cost estimates for each of the three bills included in the Rules Committee Print of H.R. 1315. The following statements were issued by the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office:

''H.R. 1315 contains no intergovernmental or private sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would not affect the budgets of State, local or tribal governments.''

''H.R. 1121 contains no intergovernmental or private sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would not affect the budgets of State, local or tribal governments.''

''H.R. 1667 contains no intergovernmental or private sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would not affect the budgets of State, local or tribal governments.''

Madam Speaker, these are the three sections—the bills—which are contained within the rule. As we have stated, as a result of what has been defined, there are no mandates. There is nothing in this bill which would cause the point of order to stand.

However, my friends on the other side of the aisle have also raised concerns about the amount of debate time provided for in this rule. Madam Speaker, the Rules Committee takes great pride in its degree of openness; and under the leadership of Chairman DAVID DREIER and of our Speaker, JOHN BOEHNER, we have tried to accommodate this request. This rule continues that record of accomplishment by making in order 11 out of the 14 amendments submitted to the Rules Committee. Of the three amendments not made in order, one was withdrawn by the sponsor; one was not germane to the bill, and one was duplicative of another amendment submitted.

I would also like to note for the record that the bill being considered today and every bill included in the Rules Committee Print went through regular order. The Financial Services Committee held hearings, a subcommittee markup, and a full committee markup of the bill.

Madam Speaker, I see that my friends are trying to make a point of order that simply does not exist. In order to allow the House to continue its scheduled business for the day, I urge Members to vote ''yes'' on the question of consideration of the resolution.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

The question is, Will the House now consider the resolution?

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

Ms. FUDGE. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 227, nays 173, not voting 32, as follows:

[Roll No. 612]

YEAS—227

Adams
Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Amash
Austria
Bachus
Barletta
Bartlett
Barton (TX)
Bass (NH)
Benishek
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Bonner
Bono Mack
Boren
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Brooks
Broun (GA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Buerkle
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Calvert
Camp
Campbell
Canseco
Cantor
Capito
Carter
Cassidy
Chabot
Chaffetz
Coffman (CO)
Cole
Conaway
Cravaack
Crenshaw
Culberson
Davis (KY)
Denham
Dent
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Dold
Dreier
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers
Emerson
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Flake
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Gardner
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gibson
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Grimm
Guinta
Guthrie
Hall
Hanna
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (WA)
Hayworth
Heck
Hensarling
Herger
Herrera Beutler
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurt
Issa
Jenkins
Johnson (IL)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Kelly
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Labrador
Lamborn
Lance
Lankford
Latham
LaTourette
Latta
Lewis (CA)
LoBiondo
Long
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
Lungren, Daniel E.
Mack
Manzullo
Marchant
Marino
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McCotter
McHenry
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
Meehan
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Murphy (PA)
Myrick
Neugebauer
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
Olson
Paul
Pearce
Pence
Petri
Pitts
Platts
Poe (TX)
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Quayle
Reed
Rehberg
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rigell
Rivera
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross (AR)
Ross (FL)
Royce
Runyan
Ryan (WI)
Scalise
Schilling
Schmidt
Schweikert
Scott (SC)
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuler
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Southerland
Stearns
Stivers
Stutzman
Sullivan
Terry
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Turner
Upton
Walberg
Walden
Webster
West
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Young (IN)

NAYS—173

Ackerman
Altmire
Andrews
Baca
Baldwin
Barrow
Bass (CA)
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Boswell
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Brown (FL)
Capps
Capuano
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carney
Carson (IN)
Chandler
Chu
Cicilline
Clarke (MI)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly (VA)
Cooper
Costello
Courtney
Critz
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
DeFazio
DeGette
DeLauro
Deutch
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Donnelly (IN)
Edwards
Engel
Eshoo
Farr
Filner
Frank (MA)
Fudge
Garamendi
Gonzalez
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Hahn
Hastings (FL)
Heinrich
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Hochul
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hoyer
Inslee
Israel
Jackson (IL)
Jackson Lee (TX)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kildee
Kind
Kissell
Kucinich
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Luján
Lynch
Maloney
Markey
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (NY)
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McIntyre
McNerney
Meeks
Michaud
Miller (NC)
Miller, George
Moore
Moran
Murphy (CT)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Olver
Owens
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor (AZ)
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters
Peterson
Pingree (ME)
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rahall
Rangel
Reyes
Richardson
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrader
Schwartz
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano

Sewell
Sherman
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Stark
Sutton
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Tonko
Towns
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz (MN)
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watt
Waxman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Woolsey
Wu
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—32

Bachmann
Berg
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Blumenauer
Butterfield
Castor (FL)
Coble
Conyers
Costa
Crawford
Doyle
Ellison
Fattah
Giffords
Graves (MO)
Hanabusa
Hinchey
Hirono
Johnson (GA)
Landry
Mulvaney
Palazzo
Paulsen
Rogers (AL)
Rothman (NJ)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Schock
Scott, Austin
Walsh (IL)
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

□ 1307

Mr. MILLER of North Carolina changed his vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

Mr. LABRADOR changed his vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So the question of consideration was decided in the affirmative.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Mr. BERG. Mr. Speaker, on July 21, 2011, I was unavoidably detained for rollcall vote No. 612. Had I been present I would have voted in favor of the question of consideration of H.R. 1315, the Consumer Financial Protection Safety and Soundness Improvement Act of 2011.

Mr. COBLE. Madam Speaker, on rollcall No. 612, had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

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

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the ranking member of the Rules Committee, my friend, the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam 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. SESSIONS. House Resolution 358 provides for a structured rule, designated by the Rules Committee, for consideration of H.R. 1315. This rule allows for 11 of 14 amendments submitted to the Rules Committee to be made in order.

□ 1310

Madam Speaker, this rule provides for debate and amendment opportunities for members of the minority and the majority to change the legislative text of the underlying bill.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of this rule and the underlying legislation. This legislation, the Consumer Financial Protection Safety and Soundness Improvement Act, was introduced by my dear friend from Wisconsin, the Congressman SEAN DUFFY, on April 1, 2011. The bill went through regular order, with hearings, subcommittee markup, and a full committee markup.

I applaud my friend, the distinguished chairman of the Financial Services Committee, the gentleman from Alabama, SPENCER BACHUS, for providing such an open process and an opportunity for all members of the Financial Services Committee to participate in reforming and changing this bill.

Additionally, the chairman of the Rules Committee, the gentleman DAVID DREIER, has once again provided Members of this body with a Rules Committee vote to ensure that we have transparency and an accountable structure under the rule which we're discussing today allowing Members from both sides of the aisle this opportunity to offer amendments and to join in the debate of the underlying legislation.

Today marks the first anniversary that President Obama signed into law the 1,300-page unprecedented Federal overhaul of the financial services industry, the Frank-Dodd Wall Street Reform Act.

I have the opportunity to discuss this bill today, and also I did last Congress. And we spoke at that time about its overarching reforms that were being made in that legislation. Additionally, I will discuss why and how it is bad for our current economy and what with the Republican underlying bill will do to protect consumers, ensure credit, and allow for economic growth.

Last year, I stood before this body to state that our friends on the other side of the aisle, that they were once again allowing the government to overstep its boundaries well into the private marketplace. One of the most far-reaching provisions of the Dodd-Frank bill that was signed into law last year is the creation of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, best known as CFPB. The CFPB is a classic example of the government unnecessarily crippling its authority into the free enterprise system. This massive new Bureau will be led by a credit czar, who will have unprecedented and unchecked authority to restrict product choices for consumers and impose fees on consumer products and financial transactions. Just about any business or financial institution who offers any form of credit falls underneath the jurisdiction of the CFPB.

The new bureaucracy would raise costs for consumers. I will say this again—will raise costs for consumers. It will reduce the number and types of products available to them. It will increase the micromanagement of financial services firms and will greatly increase the confusion caused by differing and conflicting consumer laws across the United States.

The underlying bill we are voting on today is designed to promote greater accountability and transparency at the CFPB, and to ensure that the CFPB fulfills its consumer protection mandate without undermining the safety and soundness of the financial system. This bill achieves this mission by making the leadership structure of the CFPB a collegial body, streamlining the Financial Stability Oversight Council, or what is known as FSOC, their review and oversight of CFPB rules and regulations, and delaying the transfer of functions from other Federal regulatory bodies to the CFPB until the date on which the Chair of the Commission of the CFPB is confirmed by the Senate.

This comes, and it is of a great deal of importance since it was just this week that President Obama nominated Richard Cordray as the Director of the CFPB, which officially begins its oversight of banks with more than $10 billion in assets today.

So no Director, no mission statement, no accountability, no hearing in the Senate to confirm the person who would have this extensive authority and responsibility.

The Consumer Financial Protection Safety and Soundness Improvement Act makes three important changes to the current CFPB:

First, it would change the vote required to set aside a CFPB regulation from two-thirds of the FSOC membership to a simple majority vote, excluding the Chair of the CFPB. A letter from the American Bankers Association, from May 3, 2011, states, and I quote, ''The very purpose of the FSOC was to avoid problems that could lead to risks that threaten the economy. To ignore the majority viewpoint of the regulators with this responsibility is completely counter to its mission statement and that of the council.'' This first provision ensures that the council carries out the intended mission and goal;

Second, the bill would clarify that the FSOC must set aside any CFPB provision that is inconsistent with the safe and sound operation of U.S. financial institutions;

Lastly, the bill amends Dodd-Frank which provided for the CFPB to be headed by a Director to be replaced with a bipartisan commission with the responsibility of exercising the Bureau's authorities. This was in the original House version of the bill and was changed by the Senate during conference.

In a letter sent by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, dated May 23, 2011, the U.S. Chamber expressed support, saying, ''The Chamber strongly supports this reform because it would conform the bureau to other independent agencies, ensure impartial decisionmaking, minimize the risk of regulatory capture, and ensure continued stability over the long term.''

Reforms to the CFPB as it stands are necessary to avoid business closures, limitations to start-up companies, slower economic growth, and ensure that we do not hinder the free enterprise system. These are all in the best interest of consumers and our country.

The underlying legislation ensures that the original intent of this legislation is carried out in a fair and unbiased manner to ensure the future safety and soundness of our Nation's financial institutions.

I encourage a ''yes'' vote on the rule and a ''yes'' vote on the underlying legislation.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau is a reflection of the Nation's values. It embodies the ideals of fairness, accountability, and equality, values that help us define who we are as a people. Just as importantly, the CFPB brings accountability and transparency to the financial sector and reduces the risk that consumers will be sold financial products they don't understand and can't afford to buy.

The CFPB is already hard at work. This agency has started by proposing a simplified disclosure of mortgages so the consumers can read them—isn't that refreshing?—in plain language, the terms of an agreement, before signing on the dotted line.

Despite this valuable start, today's bill is designed to effectively neuter the agency before it can fully begin to serve the middle class. In so doing, this bill is a giveaway to special interests in the financial sector that fear they will finally be held accountable by the law.

□ 1320

Apparently unchastened by the economic crisis they plunged us into, financial firms continue to take advantage of unknowing consumers. Just this past year, a robo-signing scandal led to banks foreclosing on many families who had done absolutely nothing wrong. These firms will not stop trying to take advantage of people unless someone forces them to stop. Despite all this, the majority proposes that we weaken the very agency designed to protect consumers against illegal practices and unfair play.

The CFPB was launched thanks to the great work of Professor Elizabeth Warren and the team of professionals that she has assembled to launch the agency. Their work has been tireless and invaluable. Professor Warren acutely understands the struggles of American families and her words summarize nicely the choice Members of Congress are being asked to make today.

While speaking about the nomination of Richard Cordray to head the CFPB, Professor Warren said, ''I remain hopeful that those who want to cripple this consumer bureau will think again and remember the financial crisis—and the recession and job losses that it sparked—began one lousy mortgage at a time. I also hope that when those Senators and Congressmen next go home they ask their constituents how they feel about fine print, about signing contracts with terms that are incomprehensible, and about learning the true cost of a financial transaction only later when fees are piled on or interest rates are reset.

''I hope they will ask the people in their district if they are opposed to an agency that is working to make prices clear, or if they think budgets should be cut for an agency that is trying to make sure that trillion-dollar banks follow the law.'' Members of this House would do well to remember her words.

Will we vote today to protect the middle class and the millions of consumers struggling to make ends meet, or will this body stand with financial lobbyists and leave the middle class to go it alone? In strongest possible terms, I urge my colleagues to take a vote that reflects our values and vote against this rule we're considering today and against the underlying bill.

Please let's stand up for the American families and help the helpless people who are simply struggling to get by despite what we have done for them.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam Speaker, in an encouragement to my dear colleague Ms. SLAUGHTER, I would like to inform her that I have fewer speakers as a result of committee hearings and would encourage her to run through perhaps two of her speakers at this time and then I will be available with mine.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK), the ranking member of the Financial Services Committee.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. First, I want to express my objection to the rule. The chairman of the Rules Committee said maybe I can get a unanimous consent agreement to modify it.

All amendments are not created equal. This rule gives a total of 10 minutes for each amendment, five and five. That is simply inadequate—grossly inadequate—for discussing some of these important issues. There are two amendments in particular where I will be approaching my colleagues in the majority to see if we can get an extension of time. If that is not the case, I will be very, very disappointed that major issues here on this important subject of consumer protection would be given only 5 minutes on each side. Now let's get to the substance.

My Republican colleagues have had a little bit of a change of heart since last year. When we debated this bill in committee—actually, we debated it in 2009 in committee, this particular section—they wanted to kill the whole bureau. They were opposed to the notion of an independent consumer bureau.

Understand where we are. Consumer protection has always, until last year, been consigned to the financial regulators. Indeed, the largest single share of consumer protection was given, of all entities, to the Federal Reserve—and it's been, at best, a second thought for them and for some a non-thought. And the Republican position during the debate on this was: Do not set up a separate agency. Now they say, well, we're not opposing a separate agency, we just want to dismantle it, in effect. So we will get into the specifics, but let's be clear: This is as close as they dare come now because of public opinion to abolishing the whole agency. They want to weaken it, and then they will want to undercut it altogether.

Of course, this is the third major assault they've made on the financial reform bill. Yesterday in committee, incredibly the Financial Services Committee voted to reduce the liability that rating agencies will face if they put an inaccurate statement into a prospectus. And if you buy that security based on inaccuracies in the rating agencies, they want to lessen what we try to give people in the bill as a right to sue. And of course consistently the Republicans have voted specifically to deny to the Commodity Futures Trading Commission the funds that they would need to deal with speculation in energy. And Mr. KINGSTON, on behalf of the majority, said speculation's got nothing to do with the oil prices. No one believes that except apparently him and maybe those Republicans who voted with him. Today there is an assault on the most important thing that's ever been done to protect consumers in the financial area.

Now the Republicans have been saying, we're not trying to kill it, we just want to make it work a little better. But last year—and I will put in the RECORD statements from about a dozen of the Republicans—Mr. GARRETT, Mr. HENSARLING, Mr. PRICE, Mrs. BIGGERT, Mr. MANZULLO, Mr. BACHUS, many others—making very clear they didn't want the whole agency. So this notion that they're just trying to improve it is belied by the fact that they tried to kill it.

But even then, Mr. BACHUS sometimes has trouble sticking to his own line. Here's what he said this morning on CNBC: ''We're not trying to kill it. That has been totally misrepresented. Republicans stand strongly behind consumer protection. We, however, think that safety and soundness has to be considered. So we don't worry about a Federal Reserve or an FDIC, but we do worry about a consumer protection agency whose sole goal is to benefit consumers without considering how that benefit affects the stability of our financial institutions.'' Well, it doesn't go the other way. They don't worry about what the financial institutions do to the consumers. But let me read again what he says, We do worry about a consumer protection agency whose sole goal is to benefit consumers without worrying about the poor banks.

What the bill will do will be to put the bank regulators back in charge of consumer protection—and these are the bank regulators of whom Mr. BACHUS, the chairman of the committee, earlier said the regulator's job is to serve the banks. So in roundabout ways they are trying to accomplish here what they admitted they want to accomplish before.

The consumer agency does not have an aggressive role. It doesn't go out there and do things in a positive way; it is a protection agency. Now we passed a credit card regulation bill—and many on the Republican side were very opposed to that a couple of years ago; it has worked very well. One of the main authors, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY), is here. That has helped people, it hasn't hurt them.

One of the things the consumer agency gets under our bill is the power to cover currently nonregulated entities—payday lenders, mortgage lenders—who aren't covered. Frankly, that's in the interest of the consumer. The Credit Union Federation likes much of the Republican bill, but they don't like the part that would slow down the takeover of regulation over their competitors.

Bad mortgages were not just a problem for individuals, they were a problem for the whole economy. We want to strengthen the ability to go after bad mortgages. They don't want that to happen. So let's be very clear: This is a party, the Republican Party, that tried to kill this——

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

Ms. SLAUGHTER. I yield the gentleman 1 additional minute.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, what we have is, as the statements that I am submitting show, the Republicans wanted last year to maintain the status quo in which the regulators of the banks—whose job it is, according to the Republican chairman of the committee, to serve the banks—would maintain this. And they worry about an institution whose sole goal is to protect consumers. He says, We don't worry about the Federal Reserve, we don't worry about the FDIC, we worry about an institution whose sole goal is to protect the consumers.

They do understand that politically it's not a good idea to be fully straightforward about their intention—when they would really like to repeal it—but what they are trying to do instead today is substantially weaken it. And the most important thing they will do will be to put back in charge of the independent consumer regulator the very bank regulators who historically have not protected the consumer—because some of them agreed with the chairman of the committee, the Republican chairman, that their job was to serve the banks—and it would substantially weaken consumer protection. I do not think that is the right way to go.

EXCERPTS FROM THE FINANCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE OCTOBER 2009 MARKUP OF H.R. 3126, THE CONSUMER FINANCIAL PROTECTION AGENCY ACT

REP. PRICE

"I think more appropriately, this bill would be called 'The Restricting the American Dream and Jobs Destruction Act.' And I say that with all sincerity, pointing out that there are multiple, multiple entities that cover literally millions of jobs out there, that have gone on record and said: This is absolutely the wrong direction in which to head at this time, especially this time, a time of remarkable economic challenge."

REP. ROYCE

"I'm afraid this legislation and the establishment of a product approval agency will create more problems than it's going to resolve, especially with respect to this safety and soundness."

REP. MANZULLO

"This is not the time to have additional rules and regulations on products which are already regulated. And then, to take 400 million dollars away from the Federal Reserve, which could have outlawed 327s and 228s and the so-called teaser mortgages, it doesn't make sense. This is like cutting the police force by 20 or 30 percent. That's why I have a big problem with why we're even considering this bill when no agency wants it."

REP. BIGGERT

"What's the answer to the financial meltdown? How do we prevent it from happening again? What's not the answer is to create another federal agency. Allegedly, to protect consumers. We already have the OCC, the OTS, the NCUA, the FDIC and the Fed. The underlying bill would pile 50 state regulators on top of that. Why not address the real problem with these agencies instead of creating another one? Are we creating another agency or a problem? Are we creating a guarantee for consumers that they will certainly never be, or less likely to be, caught up in a bad financial situation? Or a product that they really shouldn't have signed the dotted line for?

"No, there is no guarantee."

REP. BACHUS

"Mr. Chairman, I want to reiterate that I believe this underlying legislation creates a new large and expensive government bureaucracy with broad and ambiguous powers that will ration credit and limit consumer choice. The legislation gives this new agency and its czar-like chairman or director the power to impose both fees and taxes on all financial products, which are broadly defined. It is not about consumer protection. It is about creating a financial product approval agency with the powers to review and approve financial products. Real consumer protection must include consumer choice, competitive markets, vigorous enforcement of anti-fraud law, effective disclosure, and product innovation. Regrettably, that is not what the Democratic proposal does. Placing broad rule-making authorities in the hands of an untested agency will limit innovation and restrict credit . . . Congress should not create another layer of federal bureaucracy whose mission includes rationing credit and limiting choice."

REP. BACHUS

"What we are creating here is a new Financial Products Approval Agency that has the power to review and approve all financial products. That means they have a right basically to fix prices because they may not approve them unless a certain price is agreed to. They could actually set a price.

They can ration credit, whatever else the credit card legislation did last year and any benefit it had, it has already resulted in people's credit limits being lowered, it has resulted in interest rates going up on account, it has resulted in annual fees being imposed. Consumers today have a broader array of choices, and choice is good. Innovation is good. In fact, I think the greatest form of consumer protection is giving individuals a choice, if they have a credit card and they want to choose a different credit card or drop that credit card.

This bill is going to limit competition. It is not about enforcing anti-fraud laws. It is not about effective disclosure. It is not about protecting people from unethical behavior.

It is placing broad rulemaking authority in the hands of an untested agency, one that is going to be created from scratch, one that has no appreciation for safety and soundness, that has no history of financial regulation.

Now is not the time to restrict choice and credit. It is not the time to start rationing these things. We have seen in health care proposals to ration health care. We have seen instances where the Government wants to come in and begin to regulate the energy and how we create energy and said no to nuclear energy.

Now we see it in financial services. We are witnessing a broad expansion of Government interference and involvement. None of those things, it was not choice that created the financial crisis that we faced last year."

REP. BIGGERT

"You know, there is no question that our financial service regulatory structure is broken, and for both consumers and the health of our financial services industry and the economy, we need to clean it up. However, I fear that we are moving in the wrong direction when we strip from the banking regulators their mission to protect consumers; instead, we place the responsibility with a new government bureaucracy."

REP. MCHENRY

"What we have here is an agency that will restrict credit, will restrict new products from being offered, innovation in the private sector and in the financial marketplace, and in the end, it will hurt consumers, not help them. This is a credit constriction agency, not a consumer protection agency."

REP. BACHMANN

"I would also like to add to the conversation that I too support the Biggert amendment, because the CFPA, in my estimation, it would ultimately increase the costs on American consumers and reduce the customized type of products that are available to them, increase costs, reduce the type of products."

REP. HENSARLING

"Ultimately, we do not view this as a bill that promotes consumer protection. Ultimately, what we have is a brand new large draconian Federal agency with new sweeping powers that is going to have the ability to declare financial products and services unlawful based on subjective opinions about "unfairness" and subjective opinions about what is 'abusive."

REP. NEUGEBAUER

"When you look at this bill, we're going to give unprecedented authority to one individual, who's not elected, to really, basically determine whatever kind of consumer protection rule or regulation that they want to put on the books. And they get to do that. You know, the American people send their Members of Congress up here to make those decisions. To look after their interests. And now, we're going to relegate that decision, that empower this one individual to do that. Somehow, I don't think that's in the best interest of the American people."

□ 1330

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO).

Ms. DELAURO. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to the majority's attempt to undercut the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau just as it is set to open its doors. Yet again, this majority is siding with Wall Street, credit card companies and predatory lenders and against the interests of the American people.

Three years ago, we suffered an economic meltdown that was brought on by greed, corruption, and well-documented incidents of predatory behavior. We are still dealing with the economic ramifications of that collapse today. People all across America are losing their jobs and fighting for their homes.

That is why, as part of the financial reforms Democrats passed last year, we created the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau to reintroduce transparency and accountability in the financial sector, to put an end to predatory lending practices that were abused by the banks and mortgage lenders to precipitate this crisis, and to protect the public from future malfeasance.

But now this Republican majority wants to undo all of that hard work and put Wall Street back in the driver's seat. The bill eliminates the bureau's independence and gives the regulators, who missed the financial crisis, it gives them veto power over its actions, all to ensure that nothing of consequence gets done to rein in Wall Street.

In order to promote gridlock and guarantee the bureau is unable to curb the abuses that led to the financial crisis, the bill before us also removes the position of director and installs a five-member commission at the head of the agency, while delaying consumer protection authorities until a commission chair is named. This comes as Republicans have constantly attacked the bureau's architect, Elizabeth Warren, and made clear that they will not approve any nominee for director, including President Obama's nomination of Richard Cordray last week.

We are not here to represent the interests of Wall Street, of their banks, predatory mortgage lenders, or credit card companies, as my Republican colleagues are choosing to do, by smothering this new agency in its crib. We are here to represent the American people. That is what the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau has been designed to do.

I urge my colleagues, put Main Street before Wall Street. Stand up for ordinary, hardworking, middle class families, oppose this rule and the underlying legislation.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from San Antonio, Texas, a freshman member of this body, Congressman FRANCISCO ''QUICO'' CANSECO.

Mr. CANSECO. Madam Speaker, I would like to thank Mr. DUFFY, Chairman BACHUS, and Chairman CAPITO for their leadership on this important matter.

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of the rule and the underlying bill with important measures of accountability to an agency that currently operates independent of any real oversight. The mission of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau is indeed puzzling. How exactly a government bureau is going to determine what financial products are suitable for every American family has never been explained. I have great concern that consumer protection is merely a euphemism for consumer restriction and consumer control. But equally concerning is that this agency currently operates outside the normal checks and balances that exist as a bedrock of our system of government.

The director of the agency has enormous influence over family decisions regarding credit cards and mortgages, and there currently exists an extremely high and nonsensical standard for overturning a CFPB rule. The director can set the CFPB's budget every year without ever having to appear before Congress. Despite all of this, the person appointed by the President to advise Treasury on the setup of this agency came before the House Financial Services Committee and called it ''the most constrained and the most accountable agency in government.'' Only in Washington could someone make that claim with a straight face.

I fully support H.R. 1315, which would replace the single director with a more democratic commission and would also require a simple majority vote of the Financial Stability Oversight Council to overturn a CFPB rule.

Madam Speaker, the financial crisis did not occur because of a lack of rules, and it certainly did not exist because of a lack of Federal bureaucracies. Regulatory overkill does not equal effective regulation. It means fewer jobs and higher unemployment.

The last thing we need is an unrestrained agency adding more uncertainty to our economy and destroying our ability to grow the economy and create jobs. This legislation will help remove the threat to economic and job growth that the CFPB currently poses.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY).

Mrs. MALONEY. I thank the great leader from New York State for her leadership on this committee and in this great Congress, and for fighting every day for the American people and New York State.

Madam Speaker, 1 year ago today, President Obama signed into law the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act. This landmark law helped restore faith in our institutions and markets, helped our economy, and helped consumers. Yet on this historic day, my friends on the other side of the aisle are doing everything they can to defund, defang, and derail the important consumer protection office.

Now, what is this office supposed to do? It is going to make prices clear to consumers, risk clear to consumers, and make markets work for the American middle class families. We need this independent office.

For too long, no one was looking out for consumers and we paid dearly for it in the financial crisis. But now with the CFPB, everyone who takes out a student loan, everyone who takes out a mortgage, everyone who takes out any financial product will have a financial consumer protection agency on their side.

And we need this protection. Just yesterday, it was reported that one of our largest institutions received the largest fine ever, $84 million for illegally pushing borrowers into subprime mortgages—10,000 Americans in this suit alone—for falsifying loan documents. If a CFPB had been in place, that could have helped the 10,000 people.

Let me tell you I'm calling this Republican bill: Let's just forget that the financial crisis ever happened. Let's just forget the pain that it caused to people and the painful lessons of the great recession.

These practices cost our country dearly. According to the figures from the Federal Reserve, between the spring of 2007 and the first quarter of 2009, U.S. household wealth fell by about $16.4 trillion. That is pain to the overall economy and to American families. That is a sum that would be more than enough to pay off the entire U.S. national debt. And if the CFPB had been in place in 2001, we might have avoided the most painful and disruptive economic downturn in our lifetime.

We must fight to keep this in place to protect consumers. I believe when it comes to great recessions, once is more than enough. Let's stop these practices that hurt consumers. Protect our overall economy and protect our people. The American people agree: 73 percent favor it; 93 percent favor it. The American people favor the CFPB. We should let it open its doors to protect consumers.

Mr. SESSIONS. I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. WELCH).

Mr. WELCH. I thank the gentlelady.

If there is a problem with the Dodd-Frank bill, it is that it was passed 2 years after, rather than 2 years before, the Wall Street meltdown. That was a catastrophe. It was so bad that one of the most conservative Presidents in the history of this country came to Congress with the Goldman Sachs Secretary of the Treasury asking Congress to authorize $750 billion to bail out Wall Street's collapse.

□ 1340

That was an avoidable situation. The reason it collapsed is because of the fact that the only problem worse than no regulation or little regulation is no regulation at all. And that's what Wall Street had enjoyed. The heart of the crisis were these subprime mortgages that were loans to people who had no documentation, no ability to pay them back. They were sold and peddled not because there was even an expectation that they would be paid back, but they were sold to the mortgagees so that they could then be sold off to investors. This was the architecture of catastrophe. And the American economy is still reeling from it.

The tradition of regulation in this country goes back to Teddy Roosevelt, the Republican ''trust buster,'' who understood that the public had to be protected, who understood that with proper regulation you set fair rules for business to operate that level the playing field for those good banks to do what's right, to do it in the light of day, to provide protection to consumers who are busy with their own lives and don't have time to go over all of the forms.

This consumer protection agency is absolutely essential to providing fairness to consumers and security in their transactions, to protect them from unscrupulous activity that does and can occur, and it's important to our banks and our financial industry that want to play by the rules and do it the right way. This is very important legislation. We must defeat the, in effect, repeal and retraction of Dodd-Frank.

Mr. SESSIONS. I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DOGGETT).

Mr. DOGGETT. Only a year ago, Republicans were using every trick in the book to stop any Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. And you know, they never really stopped. The party of Wall Street bailouts, of Big Bank buddies, remains determined to deny our families basic, effective protection from credit abuses.

The lyrics of Grammy Award Winner Steve Earle, who grew up in Schertz, on the edge of San Antonio, ring true for so many families. ''You go to school and learn to read and write, so you can walk into the bank and sign away your life.'' Well, so many families were deceived in taking out mortgages or a credit card or a payday loan on terms in the fine print that only the big lenders understand. Many of these families were counting on a home, on a job, on a retirement plan, or maybe with their credit card, just to put clothes on the kids and food on the family's table.

Nobody was there to protect them from the tricks and traps that some creditors used to enrich themselves and to fleece consumers with loans with incredible interest rates. In too many of these transactions what were once known as ''loan sharks'' can today legally ply their trade.

If you're mugged on the street, you can lose your wallet. But if you're mugged on Wall Street, you can lose a lifetime of savings. That's why we need this new squad of financial cops whose sole job will be to protect those who borrow from abuse.

With foreclosures at near record highs in San Antonio and in Austin, now is not the time for a retreat by consumer law enforcement. Oppose this latest Republican attempt to roll back the power of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and oppose the effort to take cops off the beat when we need them the most.

Mr. SESSIONS. I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 5 minutes to the ranking member of the Financial Services Committee, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK).

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, if I had to stand up here and defend weakening consumer protection in the area of financial activity, I wouldn't be too eager to do it either. So I understand the absence of discussion here.

Let me make one general point. When we legislate, you have to take history into account and what the balance is. The argument essentially of the Republican Party here is—and I wish it weren't partisan, but it is. They have made it partisan, not us. The position of the Republican Party is that there is a serious danger that we will overprotect the consumer. That the Federal regulators will do too much for the consumer. That's an extraordinary fear indeed to have. That's not a fear. It's a phobia. It is based on unreality.

The fact is, as we've seen this now, we were able to get that legislation enacted with the brilliant work of Elizabeth Warren, whose nomination did not come as it should have, although I very much admire the man who was nominated, Mr. Cordray, but what we had was an unusual moment because the irresponsible practices of many, not all, in the financial community—and by the way, let me repeat: Much of the problem came from the unregulated, not from the financial institutions. And one of the things we do in this bill, which is supported by the Credit Union National Association, is to cover the unregulated so that community banks and credit unions which did not cause this problem are protected from the pressures of unfair competition by the unregulated. But what we had was an unusual moment in which there was a great deal of public awareness of the need to deal with this. So we were able to get an independent consumer agency through, over the unanimous opposition of the Republican Party.

But as things go forward, the average citizen has got other things to worry about. So what we'll see is the bank lobbyists and the nonbank lobbyists and all the people who represent these mortgage lenders already trying to erode things. Apparently, my colleagues would like people to believe that they seriously think that the danger is we will protect the consumer too much. I defy anyone to show me a moment in American history when we did too much to protect consumers in the financial area. What we try to do here is to put something in place that will go against that overriding tendency to underprotect the consumer. And the Republicans say, Oh, no, we're for consumer protection. We're not trying to abolish this agency. Yes, they are.

Let me cite the bill they sponsored last year. The gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT) supported the bill. What it did was, it would take the Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council, extend it to 14 members. It would put on there for consumer protection a whole range of Cabinet officers and others. And it would give them the power to study this issue. But it is very, very clear that this council would have no power.

Here's what it says. This is the Biggert bill that was submitted instead of an independent consumer agency with enforcement powers. Page 5: No provision of this subsection shall be construed as conferring any enforcement authority to the Council. Here's what it does to come to the aid of the beleaguered consumer. It sets up a hotline. I don't know what movies they've seen, but I can't remember one where a hotline rode to the rescue of the imperiled.

So they establish a toll-free hotline and Web site to contact regarding inquiries or complaints related to consumer protection. And what does this powerful council do with this important hotline? It refers the inquiries of complaints to the appropriate council member. You know who your council members are? The bank regulators, the Federal Reserve, the Comptroller of the Currency. So instead of having an independent agency—and yes, the chairman of the committee, Mr. BACHUS, said, We think that safety and soundness has to be considered; so we don't worry about a Federal Reserve and FDIC. They had no interest in the fact that they underprotected consumers and allowed consumers to be abused, historically. We do worry, Mr. BACHUS says, about a consumer protection agency whose sole goal is to benefit consumers without considering how that benefit affects the banks, because he believes the regulators are there to serve the banks.

So here's the Republican plan. It takes the bank regulators, you throw in a few other Cabinet officers, you get it to an unwieldy size. You let them do studies, and you let them set up a hotline. You let them set up a hotline. What a powerful tool. And when things come in over the hotline, they then refer them back to the very same bank regulators who failed to do this. Now, that's what they really wanted.

We were able to get this passed. And they know it's popular. They understand what the public thinks. The public does not think that the poor banks need to be protected against these rapacious consumers. So they come up with—instead of repealing it outright—with ways to weaken it. We ought to reject this because this particular bill is a proxy for what they really want to do—abolishing the whole agency.

□ 1350

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

I'm going to have to stand up for what we're here for today, and that is, Madam Speaker, that after this bill was passed, it took almost one year for the President to appoint the person who would run the CFPB. The person who runs the CFPB is required to have Senate confirmation. During Senate confirmation—and it's a process that takes place for senior administrators who run our government—during that period of time this person who is nominated by the President would be expected to come in on behalf of the agency as a result of understanding their mission statement and the things that they do and would be expected to come to the United States Senate and to express their ideas. This is a brand new agency. How it would be run, what their mandate would be, how they would manage the assets and resources not only of the agency but how they viewed that mission statement vis-a-vis the industry.

The President took a year to nominate this person. That person has not even begun their hearings. I think, and this is what Republicans think, and this is what our bill says today. I know the gentleman, Mr. FRANK, said, Oh, no, Republicans have something far greater and bigger. It's that they don't want this agency. Well, perhaps we don't want the CFPB. Perhaps we don't. But that's not what we're here today saying. We're here saying that until that head of that agency has a chance—a brand new agency—has a chance—after all, it's taken a year to come and speak forthrightly to elected officials that are called Members of the Senate to answer questions about how they would run this agency, what the philosophies should be, what the intent of the agency is, how the interaction between other agencies really should be done, what they think of the law, and what they see their job as being. Those are important issues. And so Republicans are saying we should not move forward on that until such time as we are able to go through that process. So that's really what Republicans are here for.

I know there are a lot of people listening and watching and think there's something sinister about Republicans. This is common sense. Republicans are here talking about an agency that will have broad and almost unlimited access to the marketplace. To overregulate, if you look at the possibilities. And we're trying to say before we kick this thing off, let's make sure we have an idea of what the leader would say. Otherwise, we should go to a group of people who will run this, not just one.

So that's what we're here to do today.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK).

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. First, Madam Speaker, I want to reassure the gentleman from Texas I don't think he's sinister. I think he is opposed to effective consumer protection. I think he and the other Republicans, some of them believe—the chairman of the committee—that the regulators are there to serve the banks. I do believe that they were opposed to it last year. And I appreciate his honesty, his approach towards openness when he said perhaps they're against it. Perhaps they're against it. They understood it would be a bad idea to go all out to try to weaken it.

But let me respond to his point about confirmation. It's bogus, Madam Speaker. He said we're just trying to hold this up until there's a confirmation. But 44 Republican senators have announced that they will not allow any confirmation to go forward—they will filibuster it, and they have more than the 40 they need to do that—until the agency is weakened. They have said they will not allow it to go forward until we allow the bank regulators, who Republicans think are there to serve the banks, can overrule this. And they weren't just saying that about Elizabeth Warren. Forty-four Republican senators contradicted the gentleman from Texas. He talked about this wonderful confirmation process. It can't happen because 44 Republicans have said until we give in and weaken the agency, they won't confirm anybody.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman's perspective of looking into my brain and knowing what I think or talking about how 44 senators override what I'm saying. I would tend to offer the argument that as we near now the August recess, they had every understanding that the President, without this person going through hearings, having to come to Congress, to the Senate, to talk about and go through these hearings, that the President would just offer a recess appointment. In other words, bypassing exactly what we're talking about should happen, and that is where this brand-new nominated person, after a year, waiting until just a few weeks before the August recess.

Madam Speaker, what we're saying is we're not going to allow, in the Senate, the 44 Senators saying they're not going to allow a recess appointment where this person is appointed, nominated, and just gets it done because the Senate is gone. We're not going to allow him to skip out of coming and having to be thoughtful and talking about what he's going to do as the head of this CFPB.

So to say that 44 Senators really are trying to do the wrong thing or that I'm here trying to suggest something different is not true. We believe that this new agency must have the person who's going to head it to come to Congress, be forthright and open to hearing questions and responding back. I think that's open, honest, transparent, and legitimate. And if the President waited a year, he should expect that we would probably have an opinion that we would not want a recess appointment.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. ANDREWS).

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

Mr. ANDREWS. I thank my friend from New York for yielding.

Tomorrow will be yet another Friday without a paycheck for 15 million Americans, and this is the 198th day of the Republican majority. It is the 198th day that they've brought no legislation to the floor to address the jobs crisis and create jobs for the American people. Now most of those 198 days, they've ignored the problem.

Today's bill is a curious approach to the problem that I think makes it worse. Americans painfully remember what happened in the fall of 2008 when the big banks started to go under and slip under. People's 401(k) accounts melted, people's home equity disappeared, and to this day most Americans' homes aren't worth nearly what they were worth in the fall of 2008. Foreclosures went up, jobs went down, and people's hopes went out the window.

The predicate of today's bill is the reason that all happened is there weren't enough regulators watching the banks. Or, excuse me, the predicate of today's bill is that there were too many regulators watching the banks. I had it backward because it's so obvious.

You understand that today's bill starts from the presumption that the problem here is that there were too many people watching what the banks did to make sure they did the right thing by the country. I think exactly the opposite was true.

I think the fact that these banks could take money insured by the taxpayers under the FDIC and gamble it on credit default swaps was wrong; I think the fact that they could sell junk bonds masquerading as valid mortgages was wrong; I think the fact that they charged extortionist credit card interest rates was wrong; I think the fact that they papered over loans for people who never should have gotten loans was wrong. And the problem was not that their hands were too tied; the problem was that they were being ignored by the regulators.

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

Ms. SLAUGHTER. I yield the gentleman an additional minute.

Mr. ANDREWS. I appreciate the gentlelady.

So I would just say to you that after 198 days of essentially nothing on jobs, they now bring to the floor a bill that says, let's fix the jobs problem by having fewer regulators watch the big banks.

There are very few people in America who think the problem is the banks didn't have enough regulators. Unfortunately, almost all of them are in this Chamber on the Republican side of the aisle.

I yield to my friend from Massachusetts.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. My friend is unfair to the Republicans, because they do create more jobs in this bill. The CBO says this bill will cost $71 million because instead of the single administrator, they want to create four more bureaucrats, with more staff. CBO says this will cost $71 million.

So, in fact, there are some jobs they're going to create. They will be for bureaucrats who can dilute the activity of the consumer bureau.

□ 1400

Mr. ANDREWS. Reclaiming my time, I respectfully would correct the record and say the Republicans have not created no jobs; they've created four, for four more bureaucrats who will ignore the abuses the banks are predicating on the American people.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield 5 minutes to the chairman of the Financial Services Committee, the gentleman from Birmingham, Alabama (Mr. BACHUS).

Mr. BACHUS. Mr. Speaker, I've been listening to the debate on the floor, and although this was concerning the rule, there have been a lot of false claims lodged against what this legislation does.

It does not gut the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. It is not anti-consumer. It is not an attempt to repeal Dodd-Frank. It does three simple things, and all three of those things, Mr. Speaker, the Democrats were for before they were against. These are all proposals that they have made. We all know who the person who first proposed the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau is. I think all of the Members of this body would say it was Elizabeth Warren.

What did she propose? She proposed a bipartisan commission. She did not propose the end result of Dodd-Frank, which was an unaccountable czar. A five-member board is done for almost every other agency, the exceptions being the EPA and the OCC. With both of those, the OCC is accountable to Congress because it is part of the Treasury Department, and is subject to OMB. The EPA is a Presidential appointee, a Cabinet member. He has to be confirmed. Not only that, he has to come to the Congress for appropriations. There is no accountability on the part of this body.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. BACHUS. I will yield to the gentleman to just answer this question: Was a bipartisan commission proposed by Elizabeth Warren? That's number one. Then you can respond to it or ask me a question. My number one question: Did she propose a bipartisan commission?

Number two, is that what you introduced into the House, saying that that was the fairest approach?

I yield to the gentleman from Massachusetts.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. First, I would say the Comptroller of the Currency, which is in the Treasury for administrative purposes, is legally independent, and the Secretary of the Treasury has no right to interfere. The Comptroller of the Currency is not subject to appropriation; so the Comptroller of the Currency is even more independent.

Mr. BACHUS. That doesn't sound like a ''yes'' or a ''no.''

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. The gentleman made a statement. I am ready to get to it. Do you want me to answer?

Mr. BACHUS. Yes.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. You made a statement about the Comptroller of the Currency, a statement which I thought was inaccurate, and I wanted to correct it.

Now, as to Elizabeth Warren, yes, that's what she originally proposed, and I decided and others on our side decided that this would be more effective. We thought, after listening, that the five-member commission wouldn't work as well, particularly with the Senate refusing to confirm with the 44 Senators.

Mr. BACHUS. That's right.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. So, yes. We listened, and we decided it would be a stronger agency.

Mr. BACHUS. I reclaim my time.

What the gentleman said is, yes, that's what Elizabeth Warren proposed. Then he said, yes, that's what I introduced. Then he said, but I decided at some point that we would rather have an unaccountable czar because we want him to do whatever we want him to do.

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. POE of Texas). The gentleman will state his point of order.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. I won't quite ask for them to take my words down, but the gentleman just simply misstated, blatantly, what I said. He said I want a single accountable czar. He was not quoting me. I said I wanted a single person.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will state his point of order.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. It is that the gentleman misstated my words quite clearly, and I believe they should be taken down if he is not ready to rescind them.

Mr. BACHUS. I will change my remarks. He said a single director, who doesn't have to come to Congress for an appropriation. The second thing we do is we have an appeal process, or a review process.

Now, if I could have the second slide, what we have asked for is what you said you gave us; but this legislation—I won't say who—created a sham review process, and we want a realistic review process. We don't think any single person ought to be able to dictate a rule without any accountability.

So what do we do? What is set up in Dodd-Frank?

Seven out of the 10 regulators have to determine that any one rule will endanger the entire financial system—one rule. In other words, it takes seven of President Obama's 10 appointees to say that it would bring down the entire financial system. How would one rule ever do that?

What we say is it endangers the safety and soundness of our financial institutions. That's all we do. That's all we do.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. I would like to inquire of the gentleman from Texas how many speakers remain on his side.

Mr. SESSIONS. I appreciate the question.

I have no further requests for time.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. I would like to inquire as to how much time remains.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from New York has 2 minutes remaining.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, in closing, this rule and this bill will do nothing but get in the way of the important work of an agency designed to help consumers who are being taken advantage of by unscrupulous lenders. The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau is not even up and running yet. There is no reason to think it won't work exactly as intended. Is that what the majority is afraid of?

Are they afraid that CFPB will make prices clear? that they will make terms and conditions clear? that they will ensure that mortgage disclosures are short, relevant and understandable by the consumer and the lender?

Are they worried about letting consumers shop for the best product at the lowest price? to help consumers understand the true cost of a financial transaction? that a cop on the beat will make sure the largest financial institutions in this country are following the law?

If that's what they're afraid of, then we don't want to join them, Mr. Speaker. I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' on the rule and ''no'' on the underlying bill so that the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau can do its job without Congress getting in the way.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, Congress has an opportunity today to ensure that we protect consumers and American business. Additionally, we have an opportunity to ensure the safety and soundness of financial institutions in the United States. That's what we are also here to do.

Reforms to the CFPB are necessary and, I believe, timely. Congress must and has a responsibility to do everything that we can to encourage economic growth, jump-start the free enterprise system and put Americans back to work. Growing our economy and slowing Federal spending will be the best way that we can work together to get our economy back on track, to get out of rising debt and also out of the financial malaise that's underway. This legislation provides for some of these necessary steps.

I applaud my colleagues. I thank my colleagues also on the Republican side who were here to not only defend what we're doing but to talk about the need for such action. This bill that we are facing here today has the support of the chairman of the Financial Services Committee, the chairman of the Rules Committee, and I applaud them for providing such an open and transparent process. I also encourage a ''yes'' vote on the rule.

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

The previous question was ordered.

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

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

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

□ 1410

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2551, LEGISLATIVE BRANCH APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2012

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 359 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 359

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2551) making appropriations for the Legislative Branch for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2012, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. The bill shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill for failure to comply with clause 2 of rule XXI are waived. No amendment to the bill shall be in order except those printed in the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution and except pro forma amendments offered at any time by the chair or ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations or their respective designees for the purpose of debate. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. All points of order against such amendments are waived. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

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

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. POLIS), 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

Ms. FOXX. I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks.

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

There was no objection.

Ms. FOXX. House Resolution 359 provides for a structured rule for consideration of H.R. 2551, the fiscal year 2012 Legislative Branch Appropriations bill.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of this rule providing for consideration of H.R. 2551. This rule represents a continuance of fulfilling the new Republican majority's pledge to implement a more open legislative process in providing for consideration of a bipartisan list of 16 amendments, which is more than at any time dating back to at least 1988. Twelve amendments were made in order in both the second session of the 103rd Congress and the first session of the 104th.

This is in stark contrast to the past two Congresses in which Democrat domination of this House provided for a collective grand total of four amendments that were allowed to be debated during the past 4 years, when three were made in order during the first session of the 110th and one in the first session of the 111th.

In fact, even considering a Legislative Branch appropriations bill is a change of pace from Democrat control when 2 years yielded no consideration of standalone funding legislation, second sessions of both the 110th and the 111th Congresses. In other words, with the consideration of this single rule and bill, the House Republican majority is making in order four times as many amendments on standalone legislative branch appropriations legislation as were provided for in the previous 4 years of liberal Democrat House domination combined.

Given the terrible budgetary mess we inherited from the liberal Democrats, the underlying bill reflects the Republican House majority's continued drive for restoring the fiscal restraint that is so desperately needed in this city.

The bill appropriates $3.3 billion for legislative branch entities, including $1.2 billion for House operations and $2.1 billion for legislative branch agencies and other offices, including the Capitol Police, Congressional Budget Office, the Library of Congress, the Government Accountability Office, and Government Printing Office. This total is $227 million, or 6 percent less than the current funding, and $472 million, or 9 percent less than requested by the offices and agencies covered by this bill.

The cuts come on top of the 2.5 percent, or $115 million, cut from fiscal year 2010 contained in H.R. 1473, which was the fiscal year 2011 continuing resolution deal that was ultimately signed into law.

That bill provided $4.5 billion for the legislative branch, including a reduction of $55 million in funding for the House from the year before, and provides a 5 percent cut in Member, committee, and leadership office expenses, except for the Appropriations Committee, which offered a larger 9 percent cut.

At this point, Mr. Speaker, I will insert at this place in the RECORD a budgetary outline of H.R. 2551.

Out of the $1.2 billion provided in this bill for House operations:

$574 million is provided for operating members' offices, $39 million (or 6%) less than current funding and $60 million (or 9%) less than requested.

$293 million for allowances and expenses, $24 million (representing 8%) less than current funding and $15 million (or 5%) less than requested.

$153 million for salaries and expenses of House committees, $10 million (representing 6%) less than current funding, and $10 million (or 6%) less than requested. -and-

$178 million for functions performed by the various House officers and employees, including the Clerk of the House, the Sergeant at Arms, and the Chief Administrative Officer, $16 million (or 8%) less than current funding, and $26 million (representing 13%) less than requested.

Furthermore, the bill provides funding levels for the following agencies:

$490 million for the Architect of the Capitol, which is $37 million (or 7%) less than the current level, and $129 million (or 21%) less than requested.

$340 million for the Capitol Police which is equal the current funding, but $47 million (or 12%) less than requested.

$575 million for various activities of the Library of Congress which is $53 million (or 9%) less than the current level and $91 million (or 14%) less than requested.

$113 million for activities of GPO which is $22 million (or 16%) less than current funding and $35 million (24%) less than requested.

$44 million for CBO which is $3 million (or 6%) less than current funding and $3 million (or 7%) less than requested.

$511 million for GAO which is $35 million (6%) less than current funding and $46 million (8%) less than requested.