California that I have no additional speakers at this time, and so I will reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. PERLMUTTER).

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the rule for H.R. 2262 and the underlying legislation in hopes of reforming the 1872 Mining Law.

Chairman RAHALL has been working toward this goal for many years, and I have tremendous respect for the expertise and dedication he has brought to this effort. I offer this support, though, with some reservations about the bill.

I favor cleaning up abandoned old mines, and we have more than our fair share in Colorado. And we need funding to achieve this worthwhile goal.

But I am concerned that generating this revenue by an 8 percent royalty may defeat the purpose of the bill. If mining moves offshore, which some economists tell us could happen, we won't have any mining from which to collect the royalties.

And I'm also concerned about the thousands of jobs, of high-paying manufacturing jobs, that are generated by mining.

We need to reform this old law. It's way overdue. I reiterate my support for this legislation, which has many, many positive attributes and is a good step towards reforming the law. But let's be sure we don't create one problem while we are solving another.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, we will continue to reserve our time.

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I'm the last speaker on this side, so if the gentleman would like to close.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate not only the debate that's taken place today, but also your demeanor in this wise consideration. I appreciate the gentleman from New York very much.

Mr. Speaker, what we're debating here today is yet another opportunity for the new Democrat majority to raise taxes in this country, to put consumers at a disadvantage, and to raise more money for their Big Government plans and programs that they have.

New taxation is not something that is new to the Democrat Party. That's their mission: grow the size of government, to tax people.

What's interesting today is the debate that has taken place about the words ''meaningful reform'' that were necessary to justify the taxation that will take place.

The Republican Party opposes this bill. The Republican Party opposes new taxation. The Republican Party recognizes again today that we know that market forces will come into play yet again today, not only to further diminish this industry, which, by and large, is located in the west of our country, which means a loss of jobs in the west, which means that it will diminish, not only the few jobs that remain, but will make America in a less competitive circumstance as related to the marketplace of the world.

But what we've heard today that has been just very interesting were remarks by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. MANZULLO) where he talked about his knowledge of what the manufacturing base of this country needs, and that is, many times, the hard minerals that are directly affected by what this bill will do.

Raising taxes means that there will be less opportunity for people to go and mine these operations because the cost efficiency as it relates to the world marketplace will not be available to those companies. So what will happen is there will be a new taxation, this 8 percent tax. There will be a diminishment of the mining industry in America, and then there will be those people who utilize those raw materials, they still have a need to produce the products which they need, which many times are not only in the best interest of the United States of America, but also to produce products that will help the United States military and our infrastructure who now will have to go overseas to do business with countries that are not exactly our closest of friends and buy their products.

So once again, what we see is a philosophy that is followed by the Democrat Party, not just the new majority of the Democratic Party, but an old philosophy that, let's go and find a way to reform an industry and to tax them out of existence, to lose jobs in this country to where we have to come down to the floor and beg for further government assistance to take care of people, and then we whine and moan about the jobs that have been lost overseas and how this had something to do with trade.

Well, Mr. Speaker, yesterday in the Rules Committee, we had an opportunity, the gentleman, Mr. DREIER from California; the gentleman, Mr. DIAZ-BALART from Florida; the gentleman, Mr. HASTINGS from Washington; and myself and we said, why don't we do something that would be proactive to keep jobs in this country. Like, let's not do things that would put us at a disadvantage. Like, let's do things like lower taxation, for instance, with depreciation policies, tax policies that would allow us to be on an even footing with other countries who we compete with.

That fell on deaf ears, Mr. Speaker. It fell on deaf ears because, really, what this is about is getting more money to run this Big Government policy that the new Democratic majority wants to put in place.

We recognize that what's happening is that at this time we have a log jam of all these bills as they try and get to the President's desk.

Mr. Speaker, I will be asking Members to oppose the previous question so that I may amend the rule to have Speaker PELOSI, in consultation with Republican Leader BOEHNER, immediately appoint conferees and move forward on H.R. 2642, the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs appropriations bill for 2008.

This week, a number of news publications, including the National Journal, reported that the Democrat leadership intends to play political games and to send a three-bill pile-up consisting of Labor-HHS, Defense and Veterans funding bills to President Bush so that they can try and leverage strong Republican support for the military and veterans funding to sneak a bloated Labor-HHS bill that proposes an 8 percent increase in spending over current funding past President Bush and this Congress. Once again, not just more taxation, more spending.

While the House Democrat leadership plays politics, however, our Nation's veterans are paying the price. The Senate has already done its work and appointed conferees for the Veterans appropriations bill. And for every day that House Democrats allow the veterans funding to languish without conferees for their own political advantage, our Nation's veterans lose $18.5 million that could be put to bear to help them for the intended reason why we're spending the money. That would be used for veterans housing, veterans health care, and other important veterans support activities.

The American Legion and the VFW have already made multiple requests, along with Republican Members from this House, urged Speaker PELOSI and Democrat Senate Majority Leader REID to end their PR campaign and begin work on this conference report for veterans funding. Unfortunately, it appears as though all these commonsense requests have fallen on deaf ears and our Nation's veterans are being forced to pay the price for continued Democrat partisanship and lack of leadership on this issue.

I ask all of my colleagues to support this motion to defeat the previous question so that we can put partisanship aside and move this important legislation forward without any further games or gimmicks. I know that this is a bold idea that hasn't yet been focused directly by Democrat pollsters or agreed to by moveon.org, but I think our veterans deserve nothing less.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to have the text of the amendment and extraneous material appear in the RECORD just prior to the vote on the previous question.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. SESSIONS. I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, first of all, I'd like to say that we are discussing H.R. 2262, and it's about more than protecting water quality and preserving the environment, which it does. It also takes into account industry concerns and provides economic assistance from mining communities. One-