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GAO Pay Raise Passes House, Minus Drug Language

By Molly K. Hooper, CQ Staff

The House on Monday voted to give the Government Accountability Office the power to provide retroactive pay raises — a vote made possible because Democrats dropped unrelated provisions that had threatened to doom the bill.

The measure (HR 5683) passed by voice vote.

The White House had warned House leaders to expect a formal veto threat if Congress combined the GAO bill with provisions that tried to give congressional auditors the authority to see drug pricing information that pharmaceutical companies consider to be trade secrets.

A version of the bill that was pulled from the floor calendar last week also tried to give the legislative branch's investigative arm the authority to subpoena and depose lower-level executive branch employees.

By voice vote, the House adopted a substitute amendment that deleted committee-added provisions that had drawn the White House's ire. The contentious provisions "are not included in the bill today," said Rep. Dan Burton, R-Ind., "so there's no real problem with it."

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