

Operation Sail expects the largest gathering of tall sailing ships ever to be assembled, and I thank my colleague from New York for helping to bring this out.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my reservation of objection.

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

There was no objection.

The Clerk read the Senate joint resolution, as follows:

S.J. RES. 64

Whereas Operation Sail is a nonprofit corporation dedicated to building good will among nations and encouraging international camaraderie;

Whereas Operation Sail has represented and promoted the United States of America in the international tall ship community since 1964, organizing and participating in numerous tall ship events across the United States and around the world;

Whereas Operation Sail has worked in partnership with every American President since President John F. Kennedy;

Whereas Operation Sail has established a great tradition of celebrating major events and milestones in United States history with a gathering of the world's tall ships, and will continue this great tradition with a gathering of ships in New York Harbor, called OpSail 2000, to celebrate the 224th birthday of the United States of America and to welcome the new millennium;

Whereas President Clinton has endorsed OpSail 2000, as Presidents Kennedy, Carter, Reagan, and Bush have endorsed Operation Sail in previous endeavors;

Whereas OpSail 2000 promises to be the largest gathering in history of tall ships and other majestic vessels like those that have sailed the ocean for centuries;

Whereas in conjunction with OpSail 2000, the United States Navy will conduct an International Naval Review; and

Whereas the International Naval Review will include a naval aircraft carrier as a symbol of the international good will of the United States of America: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That—

(1) Operation Sail is commended for its advancement of brotherhood among nations, its continuing commemoration of the history of the United States, and its nurturing of young cadets through training in seamanship;

(2) all Americans and citizens of nations around the world are encouraged to join in the celebration of the 224th birthday of the United States of America and the international camaraderie that Operation Sail and the International Naval Review will foster; and

(3) Operation Sail is encouraged to continue into the next millennium to represent and promote the United States of America in the international tall ship community, and to continue organizing and participating in tall ship events across the United States and around the world.

The Senate joint resolution was ordered to be read a third time, was read a third time, and passed, and a motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members

may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on Senate Joint Resolution 64.

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

There was no objection.

OMNIBUS CIVIL SERVICE REFORM ACT OF 1996

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent for the immediate consideration of the bill (H.R. 3841), to amend the civil service laws of the United States, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

Mr. MORAN. Reserving the right to object, Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Florida [Mr. MICA], the subcommittee chairman, to explain the changes in the bill.

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the House voted on this legislation. Although a majority of the House voted for the bill, we fell short of the two-thirds required to suspend the rules and pass this legislation. Unfortunately the controversy centered on section 201 of that legislation and that version which we have deleted in this amendment. Under that section, the current rules on reduction in force would have been changed to give greater weight to job performance in determining which employees are retained. It would have been easier for the agencies, in fact, to keep their best employees when they downsize. Taxpayers and talented, conscientious Federal employees, I believe, would have benefited from this change. However, yesterday, Mr. Speaker, on this floor we did not get the two-thirds necessary to pass that provision.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday on the floor, the distinguished gentleman from Maryland [Mrs. MORELLA], the distinguished gentleman from Virginia [Mr. MORAN], the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. WOLF], and the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. DAVIS] all spoke eloquently of the benefits to Federal employees contained in this legislation. They explained how its provisions, many of which they authored, would have softened the impact of Federal Government downsizing. I thank them for their support yesterday and for their honest efforts on behalf of our hardworking Federal employees.

Mr. Speaker, I have discussed this matter with these distinguished Members and others, and I know how hard they all work to provide these important protections to our Federal employees who are, in fact, caught up in downsizing. I am not willing to allow any special interests to frustrate their work or to prevent this House from providing those protections to all Federal employees on a bipartisan basis. That is why I brought this version of the bill forward to the floor today, and I hope that again in this fashion that

we can pass this in unanimous consent. I thank the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. MORAN], the ranking member of our subcommittee, for his leadership, and others.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Speaker, further reserving the right to object, I want to thank the gentleman from Florida [Mr. MICA] for explaining the change that he has made from the bill that we brought up yesterday and that failed to get the two-thirds majority necessary.

I also particularly want to thank them for bringing the bill back today without that controversial provision which prevented us from being able to move it on to the Senate yesterday.

We have an opportunity today to enact legislation that will have a very positive impact upon the lives of our Nation's civil servants. As I said yesterday, this legislation is the culmination of the work of the Subcommittee on Civil Service over the past 6 months. It contains important provisions that provide needed benefits for Federal Employees. For example, the bill contains provisions, originally offered by the administration, that improve the agencies' management flexibility through a demonstration projects program and individual agencies can choose to participate in and determine what types of flexibilities enhance program performance.

The bill provides a number of provisions designed to help employees undergoing reductions in force. These provisions allow an employee to continue to participate in the government life insurance programs provided that they pay both the employer and employee contribution. It would allow an employee who loses their job due to a reduction in force to continue to participate in the Federal employee health benefits program for 18 months with the Federal share being paid. It also establishes a priority placement program in education assistance grants to help displaced Federal employees improve their competitiveness in the job market through greater education.

The provision with which a majority of Democrats disagree has been deleted from this draft. With section 201 removed, this legislation is supported by the gentlewoman from Illinois [Mrs. COLLINS], the ranking member; by the gentlewoman from Florida [Mrs. MEEK] and all the Federal employee unions. That should get the Democratic support that we were looking for, and I hope we can quickly pass this legislation and send it over to the Senate for their immediate consideration.

Further reserving the right to object, Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Maryland [Mrs. MORELLA].

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, we are back today to reconsider a bill to improve our Civil Service system and help Federal employees cope with downsizing. This is the same bill that we considered yesterday, except without section 201, a controversial provision to enhance performance management. This provision should have been