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House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
July 14, 1998.

I hereby designate the Honorable NANCY L. JOHNSON to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NEWT GINGRICH,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Lundregan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate had passed with amendments in which the concurrence of the House is requested, bills of the House of the following titles:

H.R. 6. An act to extend the authorization of programs under the Higher Education Act of 1965, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3694. An act to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 1999 for intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the United States Government, the Community Management Account, and the Central Intelligence Agency Retirement and Disability System, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4059. An act making appropriations for military construction, family housing, and base realignment and closure for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1999, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the Senate insists upon its amendment to the bill (H.R. 6) "An Act to extend the authorization of programs under the Higher Education Act of 1965, and for other purposes," requests a conference with the House on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses thereon, and appoints Mr. JEFFORDS, Mr. COATS, Mr. GREGG, Mr. FRIST, Mr. DEWINE, Mr. ENZI, Mr. HUTCHINSON, Ms. COLLINS,

Mr. WARNER, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. DODD, Mr. HARKIN, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. BINGAMAN, Mr. WELLSTONE, Mrs. MURRAY, and Mr. REED, to be the conferees on the part of the Senate.

The message also announced that the Senate insists upon its amendment to the bill (H.R. 3694) "An Act to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 1999 for intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the United States Government, the Community Management Account, and the Central Intelligence Agency Retirement and Disability System, and for other purposes," requests a conference with the House on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses thereon, and appoints Mr. SHELBY, Mr. CHAFEE, Mr. LUGAR, Mr. DEWINE, Mr. KYL, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. HATCH, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. ALLARD, Mr. COATS, Mr. KERREY, Mr. GLENN, Mr. BRYAN, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. KERRY, Mr. BAUCUS, Mr. ROBB, Mr. LAUTENBERG, and Mr. LEVIN; and from the Committee on Armed Services, Mr. THURMOND, to be the conferees on the part of the Senate.

The message also announced that the Senate insists upon its amendment to the bill (H.R. 4059) "An Act making appropriations for military construction, family housing, and base realignment and closure for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1999, and for other purposes," requests a conference with the House on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses thereon, and appoints Mr. BURNS, Mrs. HUTCHISON, Mr. FAIRCLOTH, Mr. CRAIG, Mr. STEVENS, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. REID, Mr. INOUE, and Mr. BYRD, to be the conferees on the part of the Senate.

The message also announced that the Senate passed bills and concurrent resolutions of the following titles, in which concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 439. An act to provide for Alaska State jurisdiction over small hydroelectric projects, to address voluntary licensing of

hydroelectric projects on fresh waters in the State of Hawaii, to provide an exemption for portion of a hydroelectric project located in the State of New Mexico, and for other purposes.

S. 538. An act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to convey certain facilities of the Minidoka project to the Burley Irrigation District, and for other purposes.

S. 799. An act to direct the Secretary of the Interior to transfer to the personal representative of the estate of Fred Steffens of Big Horn County, Wyoming, certain land comprising the Steffens family property.

S. 814. An act to direct the Secretary of the Interior to transfer to John R. and Margaret J. Lowe of Big Horn County, Wyoming, certain land so as to correct an error in the patent issued to their predecessors in interest.

S. 846. An act to amend the Federal Power Act to remove the jurisdiction of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to license projects on fresh waters in the State of Hawaii.

S. 1158. An act to amend the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, regarding the Huna Totem Corporation public interest land exchange, and for other purposes.

S. 1159. An act to amend the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, regarding the Kake Tribal Corporation public interest land exchange.

S. 1609. An act to amend the High-Performance Computing Act of 1991 to authorize appropriations for fiscal years 1999 and 2000 for the Next Generation Internet program, to require the Advisory Committee on High-Performance Computing and Communications, Information Technology, and the Next Generation Internet to monitor and give advice concerning the development and implementation of the Next Generation Internet program and report to the President and the Congress on its activities, and for other purposes.

S. 1976. An act to increase public awareness of the plight of victims of crime with developmental disabilities, to collect data to measure the magnitude of the problem, and to develop strategies to address the safety and justice needs of victims of crime with developmental disabilities.

S. 2022. An act to provide for the improvement of interstate criminal justice identification, information, communications, and forensics.

S. 2073. An act to authorize appropriations for the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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S. 2275. An act to make technical corrections to the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998.

S. 2282. An act to amend the Arms Export Control Act, and for other purposes.

S. 2294. An act to facilitate the exchange of criminal history records for noncriminal justice purposes, to provide for the decentralized storage of criminal history records, to amend the National Child Protection Act of 1993 to facilitate the fingerprint checks authorized by that Act, and for other purposes.

S. Con. Res. 30. Concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress that the rules of multilateral economic institutions, including the International Monetary Fund and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, should be amended to allow membership for the Republic of China on Taiwan and other qualified economies.

S. Con. Res. 81. Concurrent resolution honoring the Berlin Airlift and commending the Berlin Sculpture Fund.

S. Con. Res. 106. Concurrent resolution to commend the Library of Congress for 200 years of outstanding service to Congress and the Nation, and to encourage activities to commemorate the bicentennial anniversary of the Library of Congress.

S. Con. Res. 107. Concurrent resolution affirming United States commitments under the Taiwan Relations Act.

The message also announced that pursuant to the provisions of Public Law 105-186, the Chair, on behalf of the Democratic Leader, appoints the following Senators to the Presidential Advisory Commission on Holocaust Assets in the United States—the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER); and the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. DODD).

The message also announced that pursuant to the provisions of Public Law 105-186, the Chair, on behalf of the Majority Leader, appoints the following Senators to the Presidential Advisory Commission on Holocaust Assets in the United States—the Senator from New York (Mr. D'AMATO); and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER).

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 21, 1997, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 30 minutes, and each Member, other than the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

OREGON DEATH WITH DIGNITY LAW

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, one of the most difficult decisions we in Congress routinely face on the Federal level is choosing where to act or intervene in a decision that is reached elsewhere. There are some that are relatively easy decisions for most Americans, as in the case of where there is active discrimination or a failure to

protect the environment. People feel entirely comfortable with the Federal Government moving to assure equity and environmental protection.

Many, however, are decisions that are very much in a gray area, which some choose, unfortunately, to use for political reasons. One of these gray areas, the decision that affects the end of life, is perhaps one of the most difficult and personal.

In the State of Oregon, which I represent, we have struggled, debated and agonized over this issue for the last 4 years. The end-of-life issue is a very complex one, and, with the advent of new medical technologies and our rapidly aging population, it is getting more so for more of us.

There are a wide range of ways to impact on these decisions, but none, as near as I can tell, require Federal help or interference. Yet today, the House Committee on the Judiciary is poised to have one of its subcommittees deal with legislation that would do precisely that, undermine a decision that has been agonized over in my State of Oregon for these last 4 years.

There are, in fact, some very technical problems of a serious nature with this legislation. It would, in fact, interfere with the practice of medicine, of pharmacy, of pain management, of hospice management, in ways that would have profound effects on rights that many in America have taken for granted, and that is why there are large numbers of the medical profession that have come forward with their opposition to legislation of this nature.

In Oregon, our legislation, Death with Dignity, is still a work in progress, but the fact is the preliminary evidence suggests that this option may actually reduce the incidence of violent suicide while easing the burden of both the individual and their family.

Rather than having a flood of people to our State to take advantage of the provisions of the Death with Dignity law, it appears that individuals, having the knowledge that they, their families and their doctors can control this decision, gives a sense of peace and contentment that enables some people to move forward, enduring the pain and the struggle, without resorting to taking their own life.

At this very moment, there are people in America who are struggling with this question in their family, and, before the day is out, there will be someone in America who will, in fact, hasten their death.

As Americans struggle with these issues, mostly hidden from public view, it is important that we not have that personal tragedy, that agony, that frustration made more difficult by laws that ignore the realities of modern medicine and the range of legitimate personal medical choices.

As we age as a society, exponentially, with the increase of the elderly population, and just the growth in our population, this will become more serious. As medical science continues to ad-

vance, the difficult decision points are going to be made more difficult and more complex.

The evidence suggests that Americans support the principles of Death with Dignity. But whether you are a conservative and supportive of States' rights, or you are characterizing yourself perhaps as more progressive and feel that the government should be involved with more innovative policy development, it should be a point of common agreement that the Federal Government should allow Oregonians to continue their struggle in the implementation of Death with Dignity and avoid unnecessary Federal interference.

AMERICA UNITING IN PROVIDING FLORIDA DISASTER RELIEF

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 21, 1997, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS) is recognized during morning hour business for 5 minutes.

Mr. STEARNS. Madam Speaker, my home State of Florida has been ravaged with the worst outbreak of fire in the State's history. We have seen the type of destruction which devastates communities. Such a disaster demands that people work together to protect life and property, and, in these cases, some of the best qualities come out of our American people.

Since June 1, 1998, in a prolonged drought, we have seen 1,946 reported fire outbreaks. The destruction is widespread. Fires have burned over 485,000 acres of land, over 2,200 homes and structures, and several businesses.

Madam Speaker, the outpouring of goodwill and assistance we received came not only from within our State, but from the Federal Government and, in fact, from 44 other States. Foreign countries even offered aid, with one loaning a special fire-fighting unit.

The Florida National Guard and U.S. Marine units worked together to help evacuate people, clear brush and build temporary bridges to transport the heavy fire-fighting equipment. Contractors in the private sector volunteered machinery and manpower to battle the flames and transport water. Churches, schools, motels and businesses opened their doors to shelter over 100,000 evacuees. Donations poured in to aid the victims and help the brave emergency workers and firefighters.

I am proud to represent these kinds of people, particularly the people who live in Palatka, Florida. These residents did not suffer the fire damage seen in other areas, but were able to open their doors to over 2,000 evacuees streaming from nearby Flagler County and other fire-stricken areas.

The local Price-Martin Community Center served as an information center, providing directions to nearby shelters. Folks from my county who love horses went over to Volusia County and helped with those folks who had horses that were straying. Volunteer nurses