

FDA-approved drugs for Americans. It would lower drug costs by 50 percent overnight without costing the Government of this country one single dime.

Let me say this to America: The drug companies oppose this plan, this bill. Therefore, we all know it must be good for America.

WHY THIS LARGE CIGARETTE TAX?

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

Mr. BALLENGER. Mr. Speaker, let me pose a mathematical problem. When the President finally finishes his budget negotiations with the Congress, he will have spent the projected budget surplus and more.

Where will he go to find the money to finance his liberal spending programs? How about a big cigarette tax? That ought to make everyone happy.

In the North Carolina Senate, when we raised the tax, guess what happened. Tax incomes shrank, as it did in other States that raised the cigarette tax.

So I ask the President, why this large cigarette tax. It will not produce more income for anybody except the Feds because it will be a new item to them. The States will lose income; and the President's friends, the trial lawyers, probably could not collect their billion-dollar settlements.

So what is up, Mr. President? Mr. President, either you find extra money elsewhere or you really risk losing your best friends, the trial lawyers.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COOKSEY). Members are requested to address their remarks to the Chair.

SMALL BUSINESS COMPETITION PRESERVATION ACT OF 2000

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 582 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 582

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. 4945) to amend the Small Business Act to strengthen existing protections for small business participation in the Federal procurement contracting process, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. Points of order against consideration of the bill for failure to comply with clause 4(a) of rule XIII are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Small Business. After general debate the bill shall be considered for

amendment under the five-minute rule. The bill shall be considered as read. During consideration of the bill for amendment, the Chairman of the Committee of the Whole may accord priority in recognition on the basis of whether the Member offering an amendment has caused it to be printed in the portion of the Congressional Record designated for that purpose in clause 8 of rule XVIII. Amendments so printed shall be considered as read. The Chairman of the Committee of the Whole may: (1) postpone until a time during further consideration in the Committee of the Whole a request for a recorded vote on any amendment; and (2) reduce to five minutes the minimum time for electronic voting on any postponed question that follows another electronic vote without intervening business, provided that the minimum time for electronic voting on the first in any series of questions shall be 15 minutes. 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 gentleman from Texas (Mr. SESSIONS) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. HALL), my colleague and my good friend, pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time is yielded for the purposes of debate only.

Mr. Speaker, the legislation before us today is an open rule providing for consideration of H.R. 4945, the Small Business Competition Preservation Act of 2000.

This open rule waives clause 4(a) of rule XIII against the consideration of the bill, which requires a 3-day availability of the committee report. The rule provides one hour of general debate to be equally divided among the chairman and the ranking minority member of the Committee on Small Business. The rule provides that the bill shall be open to amendment at any point.

The rule authorizes the Chair to accord priority in recognition to Members who have preprinted their amendments in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

The rule allows the Chairman of the Committee of the Whole to postpone votes during consideration of the bill and to reduce to 5 minutes on a postponed question if the vote follows a 15-minute vote.

Finally, the rule provides one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

Mr. Speaker, it is often said that small business is the engine that drives the American economy. Statistics confirm this. Small businesses employ 53 percent of the private workforce and are responsible for 50 percent of the private gross domestic product.

I am proud of these facts. I am proud of small businesses and what their employees produce for America to keep us strong.

Small business is a literal powerhouse of job creation. They represent 99 percent of all employers and create 80 percent of the new jobs in America.

Small businesses are also more innovative than larger businesses. The airplane, audio tape recorder, heart valve, pacemaker, and the personal computer are among the important innovations by small firms in the 20th century.

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Looking ahead, we have got to make sure that small businesses have the needed resources and capital to move forward so that America and Americans have the best of what small businesses produce. Looking out for the family farm, ranch or store on Main Street is something this Congress strongly supports.

With this in mind, Republicans in Congress have focused on scheduling and passing legislation to further help and aid small businesses. For example, Congress passed legislation that would help small businesses better prepare for the millennium computer bug. We remember that as the Y2K bug. Congress also passed the Paperwork Elimination Act of 1999 to minimize burdens of Federal paperwork on small businesses by employing new technology such as digital signatures. Because small businesses are in dire need for more affordable health insurance, Congress passed legislation to allow small firms to band together to purchase insurance which lowers the cost. Small businesses also stood to benefit a great deal from legislation to repeal the death tax, legislation that was passed by Congress but vetoed by President Clinton. Had this legislation been signed into law, many small businesses would be able to stay in the family when the owner dies rather than being sold to pay a debt to the IRS.

Mr. Speaker, with passage of this rule, Congress will once again consider important legislation to help small business. The underlying legislation, the Small Business Competition Preservation Act of 2000, is important to strengthen existing protections for small business participating in the Federal procurement contracting process. The Federal Government has failed in its goal to spend at least 20 percent of their procurement dollars with small businesses, in part because of the Federal agencies' practice of bundling individual contracts into packages that are too large for small businesses to handle. Federal agencies contend that contract bundling saves taxpayers money while improving the quality of products and the services provided by the government. However, none of this has been substantiated.

The database, analyses, and reporting requirements in H.R. 4945 will ensure that adequate data exists concerning the benefits of contract bundling, thus allowing Congress to make better decisions and to better assess the small business and the needs that they have. Bundling is one of the most