

House adjourns on Monday, December 17, 2001, it adjourn to meet at 12:30 p.m. on Tuesday, December 18 for morning hour debates.

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

There was no objection.

DISPENSING WITH CALENDAR
WEDNESDAY BUSINESS ON
WEDNESDAY NEXT

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the business in order under the Calendar Wednesday rule be dispensed with on Wednesday next.

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

There was no objection.

VICTIMS OF TERRORISM RELIEF
ACT OF 2001

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that it be in order at any time to take from the Speaker's table the bill (H.R. 2884) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide tax relief for victims of the terrorist attacks against the United States on September 11, 2001, with Senate amendments thereto, and to consider in the House, without intervention of any point of order, any motion, or any demand for division of the question, a single motion offered by the chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means or his designee that the House concur in the Senate amendments with the amendment I have placed at the desk; that the Senate amendments and the motion be considered as read; that the motion be debatable for 40 minutes, equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means; and that after such debate, the motion be considered as adopted; and that the amendment I have placed at the desk be considered as read for the purpose of this request.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, reserving the right to object. Mr. Speaker, I would ask the gentleman from California to describe the substance of the bill before us today and how it differs from the bill that was passed by the Senate.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. RANGEL. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, perhaps in the explanation if we could start with the bill that originated in the House, which was an attempt to take current law that is available to service members and civilians overseas in a terrorist attack, which would provide income tax relief and estate tax relief, and we brought them to the gentle-

man's city to say that the New York area was, in fact, tantamount to a war zone and that the victims in that area should receive the same benefit as current law provides for people who are victims of terrorist acts overseas. That was the sum and substance of the bill we sent to the Senate.

For the 3 months that the Senate has had the bill, they examined it in a number of different ways. They added a particular death benefit for those individuals who were involved not only in the September 11 terrorist attacks, but also the Oklahoma City bombing of 6 years ago and for those individuals who, through no fault of their own, were victims from anthrax attacks.

In addition to that, they added a number of particular provisions dealing with charitable organizations, disaster relief payments, victims' compensation funds, and a number of other items.

What we did was examine those items and, where it was appropriate, offer a generic response. I will give the gentleman an example. Oftentimes, in dealing with disaster situations, disability trust funds will be established for individuals. The problem has been there has been no consistent approach to the way in which those disability funds would be treated from disaster to disaster. However, there is a typical response which occurs, but it has never been codified.

What we tried to do in this, working together, is to find those areas in terms of structured settlements, disability trusts, and similar arrangements that could be handled on a consistent basis, regardless of which disaster is involved, using this particular vehicle to assist us in that broad-based arrangement.

In addition to that, we have one additional amendment which examines the geographic area of New York that is a zone that is clearly described in the legislation and provide a number of tax measures to relieve those individuals, authorize the issue of tax-exempt private activity bonds, create a 30 percent bonus of depreciable property in the recovery zone as defined, a 10-year life on leaseholder build-outs for those individuals who own commercial property and want to rebuild it so that the vital aspects of New York City, which we visited, the restaurants and the shops and the others, can be restored as quickly as possible, and then extension of certain replacement period provisions which those of us on the Committee on Ways and Means know are extremely important in making sure that people make a decision quickly to move back in or to establish in the recovery zone to assist in the recovery of New York City.

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, further reserving the right to object, could the chairman of the committee share with a member of the committee with whom he discussed the remedies for the problems that we face in this city? The chairman constantly referred to "we." Is there a particular group from the

City of New York that the gentleman met and discussed these issues with?

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield, I will tell the gentleman that I had the privilege at one time, for example, of accompanying the gentleman to Ground Zero, which I had not done, given the duties that we had here, and spent some time with a number of city business leaders that the gentleman and others were kind enough to bring together at the stock exchange location and, over lunch for several hours, listened to the particular concerns that those individuals had about the need and the way in which we needed to respond. I met with several New York City, New York State governmental teams, including the Mayor, and, of course, listening to on both sides of the aisle the members from the New York delegation, both from the city and the State.

In addition to that, as we all know, there are several other States that are just across the river and our colleagues from New Jersey and Pennsylvania had significant concerns as well. All of those came together culminating in this package today.

And I would be remiss if I did not thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) for his immediate and continuing offering and the members' willingness to accept his kind invitation to come and visit the city, albeit not in the way most of us had visited New York in the past on those wonderful trips that we used to have, but a very realistic trip to understand firsthand what had happened to the Big Apple.

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my reservation, because it is so important to my city that we get as much relief as possible from both Houses. But it really never ceases to amaze me of the creative legislative ability of our distinguished chairman to bring together ideas and to pull them together without the input of the members of the committee, without hearings; it is just absolutely fascinating how the things that we have taken for granted that we do as a Congress or we do as a committee have been substituted by the inquiries that the Chair can make in the great City of New York and with people that have an interest in the City of New York.

So this is not the time to object; this is the time to move the consideration of this bill forward.

Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my reservation of objection.

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

There was no objection.

The text of the Senate amendments is as follows:

Senate amendments:

Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; ETC.

(a) *SHORT TITLE.*—This Act may be cited as the "Victims of Terrorism Tax Relief Act of 2001".