

RECOGNIZING THE MERCURY RED-BONE CELEBRITY TOURNAMENT SERIES AND GARY AND SUSAN ELLIS

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the Mercury Red Bone Celebrity Tournament and their founders, Gary and Susan Ellis, members of my Congressional district, for their outstanding commitment to the fight against cystic fibrosis.

On March 15 of this year, Mercury Redbone and the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation will hold their fourth annual 10K Walk to Pigeon Key. The walk will benefit the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, an organization dedicated to the fight and the cure of this disease. Cystic fibrosis is the number one genetic killer of children and young adults in our country, and thousands of people have it.

Please join me in thanking the Ellis family and Redbone for their commitment to this noble cause.

PROMOTING RURAL HEALTH CARE ACCESS

(Mrs. CAPITO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues to join me in supporting efforts to adequately address one of the most vulnerable aspects of the health care system, rural America.

This very minute, over 60 million rural Americans live with the risk of being without critical health care services. We must make sure that we have meaningful health care reform, guaranteeing all Americans access.

In my home State of West Virginia, 50 of the 55 counties are designated as "medically underserved." In addition, physicians in our State, like many other States, are experiencing a medical liability crisis that threatens to deprive us of critical care specialists. This situation has the makings of a "perfect storm."

Whether you live in New York City or Moorefield, West Virginia, we should all have access to proper health care. From ambulance service to community health centers to hospitals to nursing homes, millions of Americans are counting on us to make sure that rural health care delivery systems will be there for us when we truly need them.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 13, MAKING FURTHER CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS, FISCAL YEAR 2003

Mr. LINDER. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 29 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 29

*Resolved*, That upon the adoption of this resolution it shall be in order without intervention of any point of order to consider in the House the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 13) making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2003, and for other purposes. The joint resolution shall be considered as read for amendment. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the joint resolution to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate on the joint resolution equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations; and (2) one motion to recommit.

SEC. 2. Upon receipt of a message from the Senate transmitting House Joint Resolution 2 with a Senate amendment thereto, it shall be in order to consider in the House a motion offered by the chairman of the Committee on Appropriations or his designee that the House disagree to the Senate amendment and request or agree to a conference with the Senate thereon.

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Mr. LINDER. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. FROST), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

(Mr. LINDER asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LINDER. Mr. Speaker, H. Res. 29 is a closed rule providing for the consideration of a very straightforward 1-week continuing resolution. The continuing resolution itself, H.J. Res. 13, makes further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2003. The rule provides that H.J. Res. 13 will be debatable in the House for 1 hour, equally divided and controlled by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG) and the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY). The rule waives all points of order in consideration of H.J. Res. 13, and it provides 1 motion to recommit the underlying measure.

I want to note that section 2 of the resolution provides that upon receiving a message from the Senate transmitting H.J. Res. 2 with a Senate amendment, it shall be in order to consider in the House a motion by the Committee on Appropriations chairman or his designee that the House disagree to the Senate amendment and request or agree to a conference with the Senate. This provision in this section of the report is necessary to permit the Committee on Appropriations chairman the authority to offer a motion to go to conference on the omnibus appropriations bill.

Mr. Speaker, this is a clean continuing resolution that will ensure that the United States Government remains open through February 7 and that all Americans who are expecting any kind of Federal benefit, a Social Security check, Medicare payments, or veterans benefits will continue to do so without interruption.

While we can debate the substance of the continuing resolution in subsequent general debate, I will note that as negotiations continue on the overall appropriations package, this continuing resolution will make sure that ongoing programs are continued at current rates under the same terms and conditions as fiscal year 2002, except for the defense and military construction bills that have already been enacted into law. Current funding expires at midnight on Friday, without action on the continuing resolution that this rule permits. Therefore, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this rule so that we may proceed to consideration of the continuing resolution and ensure that the Federal Government remains open until February 7.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. FROST asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, two important things will happen today on the floor of this House. First, we will debate and pass yet another continuing resolution, the eighth temporary stop-gap measure for a fiscal year that began almost 4 months ago. This continuing resolution represents an abdication of responsibility that has become almost run-of-the-mill under Republican control. Today's resolution, which extends the date of the current CR through February 7, means that Republicans will be 4 months late in addressing priorities like homeland security and the economy. America is struggling through dangerous, uncertain times; but the Republican Congress may as well still be on vacation.

Republican leaders are hoping this shameful failure will be obscured by today's second important event: the President's State of the Union address. The Republican majority is expecting to hide behind the glib rhetoric we have all come to expect from President Bush.

But political slogans only go so far, especially in the face of the wide and growing credibility gap facing a Republican Party that has spent the past 2 years saying one thing and doing another. And no matter how eloquent President Bush may be tonight, words alone cannot fix the primary problem this Republican government has created for the Nation at this difficult time.

Simply put, there are two states of the Union in America today. For the vast majority of Americans, these are difficult and anxious times; but for the Republican politicians and the privileged few they represent, like the corporate lobbyists invited to the White House today for a special sneak preview of the State of the Union, the good times just keep on coming.

It is a tragedy, Mr. Speaker; but it is the truth. Just take a look around the country. We will see hard-working