

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

The CHAIRMAN (during the vote). Members are advised that there are 2 minutes remaining in this vote.

□ 1410

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas changed her vote from "aye" to "no."

So the amendment was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Chairman, I move that the Committee do now rise.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. THORNBERRY) having assumed the chair, Mr. BASS, Chairman of the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2765) making appropriations for the government of the District of Columbia and other activities chargeable in whole or in part against the revenues of said District for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2004, and for other purposes, had come to no resolution thereon.

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

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

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield to my friend, the distinguished majority leader, for the purposes of inquiring about the schedule for next week and the remainder of the day, if there is any schedule for the remainder of the day.

So that Members who are gathered here will know, have we had the last vote of the day, Mr. Leader?

Mr. DELAY. I thank the gentleman from Maryland for yielding.

Yes, we have just had the last vote of the day.

□ 1415

The House will convene on Tuesday at 12:30 p.m. for morning hour and 2 p.m. for legislative business. We expect to complete consideration of H.R. 2989, which is the Transportation, Treasury, and Independent Agencies Appropriations Act for fiscal year 2004. Any votes called on amendments on this bill will be rolled until after 6:30 p.m.

On Wednesday we will consider several measures under suspension of the rules. A final list of these bills will be sent to Members' offices by the end of the day. We will plan then to consider H.R. 2622, the Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions Act of 2003, and hope to conclude with consideration of the conference report on H.R. 2115, the Vision 100, Century of Aviation Reauthorization Act.

Thursday, as you know, is September 11, and we are currently working on several measures to recognize the second anniversary of the 9/11 attacks. In addition to these measures, which we would expect to have broad bipartisan

support on, I would certainly expect to have a moment of silence on the floor of the House and a ceremony similar to the one held in the Rayburn Courtyard last year.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would like to note for all the Members, we do not plan to have votes next Friday, September 12.

I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the leader for his information. I want him to know on this side of the aisle we are going to be joining the majority side of the aisle as we reflect upon the tragic loss of some of our fellow citizens and the tragic loss of all of us and our country on that September 11.

Mr. Leader, can you tell me what time on Tuesday Members need to be here to assure themselves that they will be able to offer the amendments on the Transportation-Treasury bill?

Mr. DELAY. If the gentleman will yield further, I would say at least by 2 p.m. on Tuesday, because for Members who are offering the amendments or who wish to be heard in the debate, we will begin consideration of the Treasury-Transportation bill at 2 p.m. in the afternoon.

Mr. HOYER. We had a number of questions, one of which I will ask now because it is in my mind.

Apparently, there is a delegation leaving for Doha Wednesday night. Can the gentleman reflect upon what might be on the schedule for Thursday that they might miss?

Mr. DELAY. If the gentleman will continue to yield, I have heard of delegations leaving on Wednesday night and understand that, and that is why we anticipate a very light load, if any, on Thursday. But I cannot definitively say there will not be votes on Thursday. I think with the two sides of the aisle working together, we can come to some accommodation to where we can properly celebrate, not celebrate, that is not the right word.

Mr. HOYER. Commemorate.

Mr. DELAY. Commemorate the events of 9/11, and still allow Members to go about their normal business.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the leader for that information.

Also, Mr. Leader, I know you did not anticipate this, but when do you expect to attempt to conclude with the D.C. appropriations bill? Will that be done next week?

Mr. DELAY. I would expect that the votes on final passage of the D.C. appropriations bill could very well be held the evening of Tuesday, after the rolled votes on the Transportation-Treasury bill.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Leader, we have had a lot of concern and discussions about the child tax credit. It has been 85 days since the President urged us to pass it. Does the gentleman have any expectations that that might be on the agenda, either next week or in the near term?

I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. DELAY. I appreciate the gentleman yielding and his concern on this

issue, and I assure the gentleman that we would very much like to address his concern. But the truth is, we disagree so strongly on this issue, on how to address this issue. We on our side just do not believe that the tax credit should expire right after next year's election and certainly do not want to see it decrease in value over the next several years, so we have continued to insist to the other body in our negotiations that the child tax credit cover more families for a longer period of time with more relief. I just hope very soon that we can convince the conferees that this is the right approach to take.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I appreciate the gentleman's position. Of course, as the leader knows, the problem that we have on this side of the aisle with that position and your concern about having the tax credit expire shortly after the election next year, we have not given relief to the 200,000 service personnel who are covered and the 12 million children and 6.5 million families that would have been covered by the Senate amendment that was dropped in conference. So I understand your concern, and I share that concern. On this side of the aisle we do not want the tax credit to expire either.

Having said that, however, we would hope that the 6.5 million families and 12 million children and 200,000 Armed Forces personnel would not be held hostage to our concern about making sure that it does not expire in an untimely way.

Mr. DELAY. If the gentleman will yield further, I share the gentleman's concern; but I do not think that that 6.5 million families would want to see a tax increase right after the election, having enjoyed getting a tax credit and then seeing their taxes go up \$300 per child almost immediately. So I totally agree with the gentleman. But this bill, as the gentleman may recall, has very important provisions for the military in it.

I would just urge the gentleman to make his concerns known to those over in the other body that could move this bill within nanoseconds if they had real concerns for those 6.5 million families and the military families in this country.

Mr. HOYER. Reclaiming my time, respectfully the leader and I have a different perspective, as you know. We could move within a nanosecond to include those children today with unanimous consent. Frankly, as the leader well knows, we had a vote of 422 to 0 on much of the military tax relief in terms of moving expenses, capital gains expenses from selling homes and other expenses, the death benefit exclusion from taxes. So all of those items, there is agreement on my side, unanimously, as there was on your side. So the only issue is are we going to hold those two items hostage, the child tax credit and the military, for other items which are much more controversial, both within this body, Mr. Leader, as

you well know, and between the two bodies.

I think probably there is not much purpose in discussing this further, but we would hope that perhaps we could try to move those items on which we have agreement and continue to work on those that we do not forge agreement on. But we ought not to, in light of our disagreement on some things, damage those folks.

Lastly, let me make an observation. I agree with you, Mr. Leader, that those families, those 6.5 million families, would not want to see a tax increase next year after the election; but if you ask them whether they wanted a \$300 to \$600 credit between now and the next election or simply stay at the same rate ad infinitum, I have a feeling there is little doubt they would say, well, we will take the help for a year, even if you do not give it to us permanently.

Let us go on perhaps to the energy bill, Mr. Leader. You did not have that on your schedule. Obviously there was, as you know, a motion to instruct yesterday so that we could try to address the problem that all of us saw dramatically in the blackout that occurred on the 11th of August. Would the leader tell me what his perspective is on the energy bill?

Mr. DELAY. If the gentleman will yield further, the gentleman is very aware that, as he just stated, we just appointed conferees last night. They had their first conference this morning. They are working as hard as they can to get this bill out as soon as possible.

The gentleman knows that the Nation's energy crisis is not just about electricity. Gasoline prices are at an all-time high, natural gas prices are at an all-time high, natural gas supplies are at an all-time low. This is not the time to do piecemeal work or patchwork in putting together a bill. We need a comprehensive energy policy to meet the urgent needs across this country and across the spectrum of energy sources.

I might say that this House has tried for the last 3 years to pass a comprehensive energy package; and we are now only two votes away, a vote in the House and a vote in the Senate, to being able to put together a good package that we can send to the President, and I am hoping that work can be done expeditiously and we can see a bill in the next 2 to 3 weeks.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the leader for his observations on that.

Two additional questions. The next one would be the Medicare prescription drug bill. Obviously this is a very contentious piece of legislation, with different perspectives on how we can provide seniors in particular with relief on the prescription drug costs.

Can the gentleman tell us what you believe the status of that to be and when we might expect that bill, the conference report, on the floor of the House?

Mr. DELAY. If the gentleman will yield further, the gentleman knows, as

we all do, that improving and strengthening Medicare is going to be one of the toughest conferences that we will face. There are a lot of issues, very complicated issues, that have to be dealt with.

□ 1430

The chairman of the conference, the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS), is working with all parties on the conference and it just takes a lot of time to work through these issues. We have already worked through some. I happen to serve on the conference. We have worked through some and progress is being made. But our Members need to stay focused. The Members of the other body need to stay focused in order for us to get this done before the end of this session. But as far as predicting when we will be able to do that, that would be very difficult for me to do. But I hope that everyone will work together and get something out before we adjourn for this session of the 108th Congress.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for the information and the observation.

Let me close. We talked about Thursday, September 11, when we will come together, controversies that we have discussed. The significant differences we have discussed with respect to how to solve the problems that confront this country will I think be put aside by all of us on September 11 as we come together, as we did on that September 11 evening when we stood together, you and I, shoulder to shoulder, and we sang God Bless America. At a time of tragedy we came together with resolve and without partisanship, resolve to confront the terrorists that afflict this world, this global community, and to make our country safer and more secure.

Mr. Leader, on Thursday at what point in time do you expect us to end our session on Thursday and to participate in such both collective remembrances as we may have and individually to participate in remembrances?

I yield to my friend.

Mr. DELAY. I appreciate the gentleman's words and they are heartfelt and honest and straightforward, and I greatly appreciate those words.

I would like to give the gentleman a time, but there are two reasons; one is I am a little concerned at this moment that if I gave a projected time of being through on Thursday, Members would leave on Wednesday. We just saw what has happened to this House where some, almost 30 Members were not here to vote on the last pieces of legislation, of both parties. And it greatly concerns me that when we give notice that we might be leaving, Members take advantage of that and move on and leave the Chamber and are not here to vote like they should be. And so I do not know.

Secondly, I would hope, and we have been in touch with your offices, I would hope that we would continue to work today and through the weekend to put

together the right kind of commemoration of the day so that we exhibit to the country that the people's House has great concerns about the events of 9/11 and the events that have followed 9/11 and we want to express the feelings and the emotions of the American people on this very important day.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the leader for his comments and I know that the gentlewoman from California's (Ms. PELOSI) office will cooperate fully in that objective, as will mine and others, and we look forward to participating in a very positive way but a very solemn and prayerful way as we remember that loss and the challenge that lies ahead.

ADJOURNMENT TO TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2003

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 12:30 p.m. on Tuesday, September 9, 2003, for morning hour debates.

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

There was no objection.

DISPENSING WITH CALENDAR WEDNESDAY BUSINESS ON WEDNESDAY NEXT

Mr. DELAY. 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.

AMENDMENT PROCESS FOR CON- SIDERATION OF H.R. 2622, FAIR AND ACCURATE CREDIT TRANS- ACTIONS ACT OF 2003

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

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, the Committee on Rules is planning to meet next week to grant a rule for the consideration of H.R. 2622, the Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions Act of 2003, which may require that amendments be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD prior to their consideration on the floor.

The Committee on Financial Services ordered the bill reported on July 24 and filed its report with the House yesterday. Members should draft their amendments to the bill as reported by the Committee on Financial Services.

Members should also be noted to use the Office of Legislative Counsel to ensure that their amendments are drafted in the most appropriate form. Members are also advised to check with the Office of Parliamentarian to be sure that their amendments comply with the rules of the House.