

benefited from these mitigation grants, would the taxation problem be taken care of? And at that time I could not actually assure that it would be.

A number of them filed extensions rather than turn their taxes in. They were not sure what their liability was going to be. If it were not for the action of the gentleman from Florida (Mr. FOLEY), if it were not for the action of the people on both sides of the aisle, if it were not for the action of the other body, they would potentially be facing a tax bill that they never anticipated.

Again, I want to thank the gentleman from Florida (Mr. FOLEY) for his extraordinary work in this regard. I want to tell him if he wants to run for office next time, come to Oklahoma. We remember our friends. And we appreciate very much his remarkable efforts.

I thank so much my good friend, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN).

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

Mr. CARDIN. Further reserving the right to object, I yield to the gentleman from Florida.

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, I certainly appreciate that invitation, but I am quite proud of serving Florida.

I think it is important to thank the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. JINDAL) has been a prime sponsor, as have been Democrats and Republicans. That is one of the joys of the process when we actually get something done with bipartisan support.

I want to thank the staff on the Committee on Ways and Means but specifically Elizabeth Nicholson from my staff, my deputy chief of staff who has labored very long, hard hours on trying to get this to fruition. We are here on the floor and I am very excited and pleased that we will be able to provide this relief for our taxpayers. And, of course, the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. COLE) clearly stated without their help and the entire delegation that this effort would have been for naught.

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So we appreciate all involvement and all support.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, further reserving the right to object, I want to just conclude by acknowledging the work of the gentleman from Florida (Mr. FOLEY). He really does deserve the credit for being persistent to get this legislation passed prior to April 15.

I also want to thank the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS), our chairman, and the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL), our ranking member, for arranging this process.

It has been a pleasure to work with the gentleman. As the gentleman knows the problems we have had in Maryland with Hurricane Isabel and the hardship that that caused, I got to see firsthand the damage and devastation to families in my own State. This bill will help. It has been my pleasure

to join my colleague from Florida in sponsoring and supporting this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my reservation of objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FORTENBERRY). Is there objection to the original request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 1134, the bill just passed.

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

There was no objection.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

CONGRESS AND THE JUDICIARY: RESTORING COMITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, 174 years ago, Supreme Court Justice John Marshall warned: "The greatest scourge in angry heaven ever inflicted upon an ungrateful and a sinning people, was an ignorant, a corrupt, or a dependent judiciary."

Despite Marshall's warning, quite remarkably, nearly 200 years later the very independence of the judiciary, a matter so fundamental to our separation of powers, is still a matter of contention for some, particularly in this Congress.

For 2 years in a row now, Chief Justice Rehnquist has used his year-end report to highlight the deteriorating relationship between the judicial branch and the legislative branch, the result of a recent systematic congressional attack on the independence of the judiciary. Since I arrived in Congress, I have been quite surprised by the dreadful state of relations between our branches and the absence of the comity that historically existed between the two.

The Federal caseload continues to rise at a record pace, reaching new levels. Courthouse funding is woefully inadequate, failing to meet the needs of our Federal courts in order to carry out their mission and to make necessary improvements in priority areas such as court security. Judicial confirmations continue to be mired in po-

litical brinksmanship. Judicial compensation has not kept pace with inflation and congressional inaction on an annual basis has led to delays in important adjustments, despite the President's admonition for Congress to act.

The House Committee on the Judiciary, on which I sit, has initiated investigations of judges charged with judicial misconduct, matters that were previously left to circuit judicial councils, and the word "impeachment" has been used quite loosely and frequently as a threat.

A few weeks ago, these threats reached a fever pitch with talk, from the highest leadership levels of this body, of intentions to "look at an unaccountable, arrogant, out-of-control judiciary that thumbed their nose at Congress and the President" and a warning that "the time will come for the men responsible for this to answer for their behavior, but not today."

The Congress has also renewed its appetite for legislation that would strip the Federal courts of jurisdiction on a piecemeal basis from areas in which some are not pleased with the results that have been reached from the courts, or in areas where some are worried about potential outcomes down the road.

We have considered one bill which would remove Federal court jurisdiction over issues concerning the free exercise or the establishment of religion or over marriage. Should any Federal judge take up any issue involving that, the free exercise or the establishment of religion, he is subject to impeachment under the bill.

We had another proposal to remove jurisdiction of the courts over the Ten Commandments, another over the Pledge of Allegiance, and yet another to remove jurisdiction over any issue affecting the acknowledgement of God as the sovereign source of law. Again, the penalty for a judge who inquires or exercises jurisdiction is impeachment, removal from office.

Perhaps we should simply remove the jurisdiction of the Federal courts over the entire first amendment and be done with it.

After moving to strip jurisdiction, we recently moved to provide jurisdiction, where the Federal courts should not have it, in the Schiavo matter; and the only common denominator seems to be the desire to obtain the preferred result from the bench, regardless of the constitutionally enshrined principles of the separation of powers and of federalism itself.

Congress has not stopped here, but has pursued proposals to split appellate court jurisdiction and even considered legislation that would decide for the judiciary what they may look at or include in their judicial opinions.

Does anyone in Congress believe that we can undermine the courts without belittling the Congress itself?

Some Supreme Court rulings, such as the decision with regard to the sentencing guidelines, remind us that