

## EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

### THE PRIVATE CALENDAR

#### HON. RICK BOUCHER

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 15, 2008*

Mr. BOUCHER. Madam Speaker, we would like to take this opportunity to set forth some of the history behind, as well as describe the workings of the Private Calendar. We hope this might be of some value to the Members of this House, especially our newer colleagues. Of the four House Calendars, the Private Calendar is the one to which all Private Bills are referred. Private Bills deal with specific individuals, corporations, institutions, and so forth, as distinguished from public bills which deal with classes only.

Of the 108 laws approved by the First Congress, only 5 were Private Laws. But their number quickly grew as the wars of the new Republic produced veterans and veterans' widows seeking pensions and as more citizens came to have private claims and demands against the Federal Government. The 49th Congress, 1885 to 1887, the first Congress for which complete workload and output data is available, passed 1,031 Private Laws, as compared with 434 Public Laws. At the turn of the century the 56th Congress passed 1,498 Private Laws and 443 Public Laws—a better than three to one ratio.

Private bills were referred to the Committee of the Whole House as far back as 1820, and a calendar of private bills was established in 1839. These bills were initially brought before the House by special orders, but the 62nd Congress changed this procedure by its rule XXIV, clause six which provided for the consideration of the Private Calendar in lieu of special orders. This rule was amended in 1932, and then adopted in its present form on March 27, 1935. When the House recodified its rules in the 106th Congress, this provision was transferred from rule XXIV, clause 6 to rule XV, clause 5.

A determined effort to reduce the private bill workload of the Congress was made in the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946. Section 131 of that Act banned the introduction or the consideration of four types of private bills: first, those authorizing the payment of money for pensions; second, for personal or property damages for which suit may be brought under the Federal tort claims procedure; third, those authorizing the construction of a bridge across a navigable stream; or fourth, those authorizing the correction of a military or naval record. This ban afforded some temporary relief but was soon offset by the rising postwar and cold war flood for private immigration bills. The 82nd Congress passed 1,023 Private Laws, as compared with 594 Public Laws. The 88th Congress passed 360 Private Laws compared with 666 Public Laws.

Under rule XV, clause 5, the Private Calendar is called the first and third Tuesday of each month. The consideration of the Private Calendar bills on the first Tuesday is manda-

tory unless dispensed with by a two-thirds vote. On the third Tuesday, however, recognition for consideration of the Private Calendar is within the discretion of the Speaker and does not take precedence over other privileged business in the House.

On the first Tuesday of each month, after disposition of business on the Speaker's table for reference only, the Speaker directs the call of the Private Calendar. If a bill called is objected to by two or more Members, it is automatically recommitted to the Committee reporting it. No reservation of objection is entertained.

Bills un-objected to are considered in the House in the Committee of the Whole. On the third Tuesday of each month, the same procedure is followed with the exception that omnibus bills embodying bills previously rejected have preference and are in order regardless of objection. Such omnibus bills are read by paragraph and no amendments are entertained except to strike out or reduce amounts or provide limitations. Matters so stricken out shall not be again included in an omnibus bill during that session. Debate is limited to motions allowable under the rule and does not admit motions to strike out the last word or reservation of objections. The rules prohibit the Speaker from recognizing Members for statements or for requests for unanimous consent for debate. Omnibus bills so passed are thereupon resolved in their component bills, which are engrossed separately and disposed of as if passed separately.

Private Calendar bills unfinished on one Tuesday go over to the next Tuesday on which such bills are in order and are considered before the call of bills subsequently on the calendar. Omnibus bills follow the same procedure and go over to the next Tuesday on which that class of business is again in order. When the previous question is ordered on a Private Calendar bill, the bill comes up for disposition on the next legislative day.

Madam Speaker, we would also like to describe to the newer Members the Official Objectors Committee, the system the House has established to deal with the great volume of Private Bills. The Majority Leader and the Minority Leader each appoint three Members to serve as Private Calendar Objectors during a Congress. The Objectors are on the Floor ready to object to any Private Bill which they feel is objectionable for any reason. Seated near them to provide technical assistance are the majority and minority legislative clerks. Should any Member have a doubt or question about a particular Private Bill, he or she can get assistance from objectors, their clerks, or from the Member who introduced the bill.

The great volume of private bills and the desire to have an opportunity to study them carefully before they are called on the Private Calendar has caused the six Objectors to agree upon certain ground rules. The rules limit consideration of bills placed on the Private Calendar only shortly before the calendar is called. With this agreement, adopted on July 10, 2008, the Members of the Private

Calendar Objectors Committee have agreed that during the 110th Congress, they will consider only those bills which have been on the Private Calendar for a period of seven (7) days, excluding the day the bill is reported and the day the calendar is called. Reports must be available to the Objectors for three (3) calendar days.

It is agreed that the majority and minority clerks will not submit to the Objectors any bills which do not meet this requirement. This policy will be strictly enforced except during the closing days of a session when the House rules are suspended.

This agreement was entered into by: The gentleman from Virginia (Mr. BOUCHER), the gentleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF), the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GRIJALVA), the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH), the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING), and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. FORBES).

We feel confident that we speak for our colleagues when we request all Members to enable us to give the necessary advance consideration to private bills by not asking that we depart from the above agreement unless absolutely necessary.

RICK BOUCHER.  
ADAM SCHIFF.  
RAÚL GRIJALVA.  
LAMAR SMITH.  
STEVE KING.  
RANDY FORBES.

### RECOGNIZING MITRE'S 50 YEARS OF SERVICE

#### HON. JAMES P. MORAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 15, 2008*

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the accomplishments achieved by the MITRE Corporation throughout its 50 years of service to our Nation. MITRE has always been one of the leading research corporations dedicated to tackling the difficult technological issues for the Department of Defense.

MITRE was born in the Lincoln Laboratories of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in July 1958 as a non-profit company designed to provide research for America's air defense systems. 50 years later, MITRE thrives as a defense-oriented Federally Funded Research and Development Center (FFRDC) that provides cutting edge systems including enterprise-wide control, communications, computer, intelligence surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities to the Department.

By providing advanced information technology and engineering systems, MITRE contributes to various areas vital to our Nation's defense. MITRE is known for its leading role in many successful defense systems that secure our Nation from attack, including the SemiAutomatic Ground Environment (SAGE), the Cheyenne Mountain and the NORAD complex, Ballistic Missile Early Warning System

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