

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

There was no objection.

PROVIDING FOR USE OF CATAFALQUE IN CRYPT BENEATH ROTUNDA OF CAPITOL IN CONNECTION WITH MEMORIAL SERVICES FOR THE LATE HONORABLE HARRY A. BLACKMUN, FORMER ASSOCIATE JUSTICE OF THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on House Administration be discharged from further consideration of the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 45) providing for the use of the catafalque situated in the crypt beneath the rotunda of the Capitol in connection with memorial services to be conducted in the Supreme Court Building for the late honorable Harry A. Blackmun, former Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

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

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, reserving the right to object, and I have no intention of objecting, but I will ask the chairman if he has any comments he wants to make with reference to the legislation.

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

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

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, the ranking member, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER), for yielding.

This is a serious occasion when an Associate Justice of the United States, after 24 years of service, passes away, and it is entirely appropriate that the catafalque reserved in the basement of the Capitol, known as the Lincoln catafalque, since he was the first to use that catafalque, be provided for the Supreme Court for this occasion.

It is always a sad time when the catafalque is used, but the memories and the history of this country, intertwined with the catafalque, I believe, carry with it the appropriate seriousness and ceremonial nature of recognizing one of America's finest former Justices of the Supreme Court.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. HOYER. Reclaiming my time, I echo the chairman's comments, Mr. Speaker. I believe that it is appropriate in this instance for us to authorize the use of the catafalque by the Supreme Court, as the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS) has said, to honor

someone who has given such long and honored service to the country.

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 Clerk read the concurrent resolution, as follows:

H. CON. RES. 45

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That the Architect of the Capitol is authorized and directed to transfer to the custody of the Chief Justice of the United States the catafalque which is situated in the crypt beneath the rotunda of the Capitol so that such catafalque may be used in the Supreme Court Building in connection with services to be conducted there for the late honorable Harry A. Blackmun, former Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States.

The concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS AT DULLES AND NATIONAL AIRPORTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I have just come from a markup where a unanimous vote was taken for an historic breakthrough similar to what this body achieved last year with the highway trust fund monies.

We voted H.R. 1000 in the House Subcommittee on Aviation of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure to allow the gasoline taxes to go for what the taxpayers intended them for, and that is to pay for infrastructure improvements in our airports. We hope to break a stalemate that developed last year.

My interest is very special, because the National Capital region, through which most Members travel, has been the subject of a special spotlight. The trust fund will undoubtedly do for other airports what it will do for National and for Dulles. For example, to triple the amounts that would be forthcoming for these two airports, if this bill passes.

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I do not need to remind Members that 25 million people come through these airports, many of them your own constituents, so you have surely the

same kind of concern and interest I do, that these funds be released.

Some of my colleagues may wonder why the new terminal is completed but the historic old terminal is as it was, and that is because our funds have been held up quite apart from the reauthorization but because National and Dulles have been caught in the slot and perimeter controversy; that is to say, in the controversy over how many takeoffs and landings will be there. Republican and Democrat, Maryland, Virginia and the District, we have stood side by side saying no more slots at National, no more slots, because despite economic benefits for the District which I would ordinarily be for, there are such significant safety hazards, insufferable noise and increased ground and air pollution that it made no sense to crowd overcrowded National. At the same time we would seriously hurt Dulles Airport which, instead of having its competitive advantage increased, would lose millions of dollars' worth of business.

In our subcommittee, we reached a reasonable accommodation with the addition of only six slots, and those going at only two per hour for underserved airports with no increase in the perimeter, that is, the number of miles from Washington that can be traveled, so there will not be increased noise in our neighborhoods. Remember, we are talking about an airport that is essentially located in downtown Washington.

We have also succeeded in getting \$200 million released that was held up irrationally because in 1996 a link between getting nominations to the Metropolitan Airport Authority and the release of this money appeared in a bill. Our subcommittee delinks this so that when Members go to National Airport, they in fact will see the whole airport being renovated. We are to the point where if we do not proceed, the burden will be very great and we simply cannot wait much longer.

The other body has a provision in its reauthorization of the FAA, that is what is here, H.R. 1000, they have in S. 82, the companion bill, an additional 48 slots. I just want to say to this body here and now that the one thing National cannot accept is 48 new slots. That is unacceptable special interest legislation. It is this body that some years ago instituted a slot rule because National is one of the most dangerous airports in the country to fly into. It is greatly overcrowded. We hope that we can reach out in accommodation with the other body.

This is an airport for the world and for the country. In its wisdom, this body gave oversight of this airport to a metropolitan regional authority a few years ago. That authority has done a spectacular job. You can see it with your own eyes in the additions that are being made at Dulles, with the renovation of National Airport. Nevertheless,

it is not a state of the art airport. It can never be a state of the art airport. We can make it more comfortable for people coming in. We must not overcrowd the air and make an airport that is now safe only because of a restriction on the number of slots unsafe because without thinking through this issue we have bowed to the Senate. I am sure that when we get into conference we can reach the kind of accommodation that all can live with.

To the Members I say, welcome to National Airport, welcome to Dulles Airport. Let us pass H.R. 1000 and get them both finished and safe.

IN MEMORY OF JOE DiMAGGIO, THE YANKEE CLIPPER

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KINGSTON). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. FOSSELLA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FOSSELLA. Mr. Speaker, yesterday our Nation lost a bit of its soul when the Yankee Clipper, Joe DiMaggio, waved good-bye for the last time. Unlike many, Joe DiMaggio deserved the accolades he received. Joe DiMaggio was more than just a great baseball player, I think we would all admit. Some argue he was simply the best. Clearly he was one of the best. For me and I believe many, it was not the hitting streak, the way he glided around the bases, the outfield he roamed effortlessly, or the many world championships he helped to secure. Heck, I never even saw Joe DiMaggio play. He retired 14 years before I was born. Certainly it was on the field where Joe DiMaggio earned his glory but it was off the field where he earned his respect and the everlasting admiration of millions. Joe DiMaggio lived a life with grace, dignity, integrity and humility. This is what I believe made Joe DiMaggio so very, very special.

Over time, celebrities puncture our culture or splash onto the scene only to disappear after what seems like a moment. These fleeting "stars" that society grabs and lets go so quickly grab the big headlines, go to the best parties, or are seen with the "right people." Joe DiMaggio, on the other hand, was timeless. He grabbed a part of an era, the World War II generation, that some think is the best, and carried it with class until the day he died. Unlike many of those celebrities, Joe DiMaggio enjoyed universal love. Why the spontaneous standing ovations when he walked into a restaurant 47 years after he left the game of baseball? Because the people of this country still acknowledge greatness in their own special way. To many, Joe DiMaggio represented the wonders and goodness of man and this great country, America. You see, to many in this country, our country, character still matters.

Let me also take a moment to pay tribute to that city that Joe DiMaggio called home, and the city where Joe DiMaggio was one of its favorite sons, New York. In some parts, New York City gets a bad rap. That is a shame. New York City is unlike any other city in the world. Its pace may be too fast, crowds too large, streets too congested, but with all of this comes millions of people who love life, the United States of America, baseball and yes, the Yankees. And not necessarily in that order. And these folks loved Joe DiMaggio. Mr. DiMaggio embraced New York City and made it special and New York City embraced Joe DiMaggio and will never let him go.

And also what Joe DiMaggio represented, son of an immigrant from Italy who personified all the goodness of the great contributions Italians have made to build this great country. He was proud of his Italian heritage but he loved this country.

When Joe DiMaggio retired from baseball, he still had what others would argue is a few good years left. But not for Mr. DiMaggio. He walked away because he had standards. History will record those standards along with the hitting streak, the grace, the quiet dignity and integrity which will forever be the hallmark of one of the greatest baseball players of all time. So no more opening days, just memories and a celebration of a wonderful life. I wish I could say it ain't so, but the Yankee Clipper has set sail.

Mr. Speaker, in closing I guess he will forever be immortalized in a song written by the songwriter Paul Simon. In today's New York Times, Mr. Simon, in an op-ed piece, talks about those words, "Where have you gone Joe DiMaggio? A Nation turns its lonely eyes to you."

Mr. Simon says,

In the 50's and the 60's, it was fashionable to refer to baseball as a metaphor for America, and DiMaggio represented the values of that America, excellence and fulfillment of duty, he often played in pain, combined with a grace that implied a purity of spirit, an off-the-field dignity and a jealously guarded private life.

Mr. DiMaggio was truly a great American and will forever be missed.

HOME HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk about an issue which is of great importance to my State of Vermont and to I believe virtually every State in the country, and that is the crisis that is currently occurring with regards to home health care.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, in 1997 the Congress, against my vote, without my vote, passed the so-called Balanced

Budget Act which cut \$115 billion from Medicare, including \$16 billion from home health care. Of course, those savings were used to provide tax breaks, most of which went to the very wealthiest people in this country. So we cut Medicare, we cut home health care, and we gave tax breaks to the rich and to the very rich.

The result of that is that since 1997, cuts in home health care agencies have forced about 20 percent of those agencies to close, and agencies that are still open such as the 13 efficient nonprofit agencies in the State of Vermont are now struggling to meet the home health needs of their constituents with fewer resources.

Last year, we put a band-aid on the problem and passed limited home health relief. We took a small step forward, but clearly nowhere near enough. Right now we have got to stop the upcoming 15 percent across-the-board cut in home health care. We need to increase home health care per visit cost limits, we need to reform our beneficiary limits so that the sickest patients who need many home health visits have access to them. I am hopeful that Congress this year will do the right thing and pass comprehensive home health reforms this year that will truly help our agencies and equally as important Medicare beneficiaries who need home health care.

There is one particular aspect of the debate about home health care that concerns me very, very much, and, that is, that the Medicare commission is proposing a 10 percent copayment for home health care which would result in out-of-pocket payments for the average senior of \$470 a year. Now, some people may say, "Well, \$470 is not a lot of money." Well, it is a heck of a lot of money if you are an elderly person, if you are frail, and if you have an income of \$8,000 or \$9,000 or \$10,000 a year. That is 4 percent or 5 percent of your total income. At a time when many of our seniors cannot afford the prescription drugs that they need, when their out-of-pocket health care costs are soaring, it would be an absolute outrage to ask the elderly, sick, poor people to be paying \$470 a year more for a program which they now receive for nothing and which they should continue to receive without cost.

It is beyond my comprehension, Mr. Speaker, that at this moment at the same exact time that people are talking about imposing an horrendous copayment on low-income, sick senior citizens, these same people are talking about tax breaks for millionaires and billionaires. In other words, in all essence you raise taxes for the poor, the sick and the elderly, those people who are too frail to leave their homes, and you take that money and you give tax breaks to millionaires and billionaires. That is unconscionable and it is beyond my comprehension that any Member of