

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER
PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair announces that she will postpone further proceedings today on each motion to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Any record votes on postponed questions will be taken after debate has concluded on all motions to suspend the rules, but not before 6:15 p.m. today.

NATIONAL DONOR DAY

Mr. UPTON. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 247) expressing the sense of Congress regarding the importance of organ, tissue, bone marrow, and blood donation and supporting National Donor Day.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 247

Whereas more than 70,000 individuals await organ transplants at any given moment;

Whereas another man, woman, or child is added to the national organ transplant waiting list every 16 minutes;

Whereas, despite the progress in the last 15 years, more than 10 people per day die because of a shortage of donor organs;

Whereas almost everyone is a potential organ, tissue, and blood donor;

Whereas transplantation has become an element of mainstream medicine that prolongs and enhances life;

Whereas, for the third consecutive year, a coalition of health organizations is joining forces for National Donor Day;

Whereas the first two National Donor Days raised a total of nearly 17,000 units of blood, added over 2,400 potential donors to the National Marrow Donor Program Registry, and distributed tens of thousands of organ and tissue pledge cards;

Whereas National Donor Day is America's largest one-day organ, tissue, bone marrow, and blood donation event; and

Whereas a number of businesses, foundations, health organizations, and the Department of Health and Human Services have designated February 12, 2000, as National Donor Day: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress—

(1) supports the goals and ideas of National Donor Day;

(2) encourages all Americans to learn about the importance of organ, tissue, bone marrow, and blood donation and to discuss such donation with their families and friends; and

(3) requests that the President issue a proclamation calling on the people of the United States to conduct appropriate ceremonies, activities, and programs to demonstrate support for organ, tissue, bone marrow, and blood donation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. UPTON) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. THURMAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. UPTON).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. UPTON. Madam 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. Con. Res. 247.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. UPTON. Madam Speaker, I yield myself 5 minutes.

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Con. Res. 247, a resolution supporting National Donor Day and recognizing the importance of organ, tissue, bone marrow, and blood donation.

Americans who donate their organs, tissue, bone marrow, or blood to save another's life are indeed heroes; and I am delighted that the House today has taken time to recognize them as such. But despite the generosity of the American people and improvements in medical treatments for transplant patients, the supply of organs continues to be tragically short of the need for transplantation among patients with end-stage organ disease and organ failure. Every year the number of patients who die while waiting for a transplant increases, and so does the national waiting list, which now exceeds 65,000 patients waiting for kidney, liver, heart, lung, pancreas and intestine transplants. We must do more.

Our Nation may also be facing an increasingly severe shortage of blood. As Chairman of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, I have held a series of hearings over the last couple of months on this issue and the alternatives for addressing it. We have learned that virtually every 3 seconds someone in our country needs blood. Supplies need to be replenished daily to meet the demand. An estimated 32,000 units of blood are used in the country every day. As many as 95 percent of Americans are going to need a blood transfusion some time in their life, but yet only 5 percent of Americans donate blood.

We are quickly heading to a point where blood demand is going to exceed our supply. Several weeks ago Washington was down to less than a 1-day supply, and a critical need for blood remains evident throughout the country even this week.

As many may know, our committee, the Committee on Commerce, has spent a great deal of time and effort this last year working to develop good solutions to the difficult problem of increasing the supply of donated organs while safeguarding the system from unintended bureaucratic interference that would dramatically harm efforts to increase donations.

Many of those ideas are embodied in H.R. 2418, The Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network Amendments

of 1999, which was reported out of the committee at the end of last session. H.R. 2418 ensures that decision-making with regard to organ transplantation remains in the transplant community, and not in the hands of the Federal Government.

This bill includes a provision to provide living and travel expenses for individuals who travel across State lines in order to donate an organ to a person requiring such. After many hearings on this important issue, our committee found there are willing donors who would like to save the life of another American but also find themselves in financial circumstances that would make donation of a life-saving organ even more of a hardship. H.R. 2418 would ease that burden, and I would urge this body to take up that bill and pass legislation that would make organ donation easier for every American.

I am also proud to say that due to the Committee on Commerce's efforts, H.R. 3075, the Medicare, Medicaid and S-CHIP Balanced Budget Refinement Act of 1999 added \$200 million to pay for additional immunosuppressive drug therapy. Medicare presently only covers these drugs for 36 months. This bill takes a first step at addressing that issue and allows us to provide more coverage for needy organ transplant patients. Access to these life-saving drugs prevents the organ rejection that places so much strain on the organ supply network. We should all be grateful to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. CANADY) and those who cosponsored the legislation for bringing this issue to the attention of the committee.

While we in Congress continue to safeguard the organ allocation system from harmful bureaucratic interference and work to address financial problems living donors face, as well as those recipients who need affordable immunosuppressive drug therapy, let us take the time this afternoon to applaud the ordinary American, every American, who has given the gift of life to their neighbors and families by donating organs, tissue, bone marrow, or blood. That is what this resolution calls for. We salute you for your sacrifice and your charity.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. THURMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I would just like to say that the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA) also is one of the cosponsors of this legislation, so we are pleased to have her in the Chair for this great day.

I would say to my friend, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. UPTON), I appreciate the statistics that he gave us and the other issues that are involved in organ donation, and particularly the issue of the immunosuppressive drugs, which we find as one