

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES—Tuesday, October 24, 2000

The House met at 10:30 a.m.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Cheek, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed without amendment a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 3679. An act to provide for the minting of commemorative coins to support the 2002 Salt Lake Olympic Winter Games and the programs of the United States Olympic Committee.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed with amendments in which the concurrence of the House is requested, bills of the House of the following titles:

H.R. 898. An act designating certain land in the San Isabel National Forest in the State of Colorado as the "Spanish Peaks Wilderness".

H.R. 2884. An act to extend energy conservation programs under the Energy Policy and Conservation Act through fiscal year 2003.

H.R. 3023. An act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Bureau of Reclamation, to convey property to the Greater Yuma Port Authority of Yuma County, Arizona, for use as an international port of entry.

The message also announced that the Senate agrees to the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 150) "An Act to authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to convey National Forest System lands for use for educational purposes, and for other purposes", with amendment.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed a concurrent resolution of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. Con. Res. 154. Concurrent resolution to acknowledge and salute the contributions of coin collectors.

The message also announced that the Senate agrees to the report of the committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the House to the bill (S. 835) "An Act to encourage the restoration of estuary habitat through more efficient project financing and enhanced coordination of Federal and non-Federal restoration programs, and for other purposes."

The message also announced that the Senate disagrees to the amendment of the House to the bill (S. 2796) "An Act to provide for the conservation and development of water and related resources, to authorize the Secretary of the Army to construct various projects for improvements to rivers and harbors

of the United States, and for other purposes," and agrees to a conference asked by the House on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses thereon, and appoints Mr. SMITH of New Hampshire, Mr. WARNER, Mr. VOINOVICH, Mr. BAUCUS, and Mr. GRAHAM, to be the conferees on the part of the Senate.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 19, 1999, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 30 minutes, and each Member except the majority leader, the minority leader or the minority whip limited to not to exceed 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS) for 5 minutes.

REPUBLICAN CONGRESS HAS
WORKED TIRELESSLY FOR
AMERICA

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, in this pivotal election, the American people will hear a lot of back and forth about who works harder for their country. Shakespeare wrote, "What's past is prologue." And I believe no other phrase can quite describe both the achievements of the Republican Congress and its vision for America's future.

In 1995 when Republicans took over here in the House of Representatives, one of the first orders of business for the new Republican majority was to declare that it was going to comply and be bound by the same laws with which all Americans are forced to comply.

We reformed the bloated, inefficient welfare system which held captive many Americans who only wanted a better life for their families. Providing a welfare-to-work incentive for both individuals and businesses, the Republican-led Congress succeeded in dropping the welfare rolls to the lowest level in history. Congress extended health insurance under the Medicaid program for millions of uninsured children, giving them the proper care and attention that they deserve. The Republicans passed health insurance portability to guarantee working Americans that if they switched jobs or lost their jobs, they could continue with

their current health coverage. We reformed the Food and Drug Administration, giving people quicker access to lifesaving drugs and medical devices and providing for better food quality.

The Republican Congress enhanced criminal penalties for sexual crimes against children and established a nationwide tracking system for sexual predators. We also enhanced punishment for drug-induced rape. We boosted education by increasing funding and giving local school districts and States the flexibility to use Federal funds to best meet the needs of children.

For seniors, Mr. Speaker, we passed legislation ending the Social Security earnings limit test which unfairly penalized senior citizens for simply trying to make a living. The House also voted to roll back the 1993 Clinton-Gore tax on Social Security benefits.

We passed legislation to repeal the marriage penalty tax and the estate tax here. Sadly and unfortunately, the President vetoed both our bills and chose to turn his back on millions of Americans. We strengthened our national defense by increasing military pay and retirement benefits, enhancing health care benefits for veterans, providing the care and respect for our military which this administration has misused and forsaken.

And let us not forget the budget, Mr. Speaker. The Republicans passed the Balanced Budget Act and bound our appropriations bills to spending caps. The Nation's checkbook is in the black and we have paid down the debt by nearly \$270 billion.

I would like to point out that the Democrats controlled the White House, the Senate and the House, right here in the 103d Congress. Instead of protecting Social Security, Medicare and providing for prescription drugs, the Democrats succeeded in increasing the Social Security tax on seniors, increasing the tax on gasoline, and increasing the overall tax burden on Americans. At the same time, the Democrats squandered the Social Security surplus. Before 1995, when Republicans took over here, the Democrats spent billions of dollars of the Social Security surplus as if it was a slush fund for Members of Congress.

The Republicans, in sharp contrast, have chosen to lock the Social Security surplus away, making it untouchable for anything except Social Security. Last month, the House passed the debt relief lockbox which will continue our pledge to protect 100 percent of both Social Security and Medicare

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.