

D.C. APPROPRIATION PASSES  
UNANIMOUSLY FROM COMMITTEE

□ 1730

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor not to take the whole hour, but for a few minutes because the D.C. appropriation today passed in full committee under the chair of the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KNOLLENBERG) and the ranking member, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FATTAH). This was a noteworthy subcommittee markup.

Mr. Speaker, the controversy often associated with the D.C. appropriation was not there today. The bill passed unanimously. One important reason for this, indeed the most important reason for the smooth way in which the bill transacted its way through the committee today was its chairman, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KNOLLENBERG). Like a laser beam, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KNOLLENBERG) has been focused on the clear obligation of the chair of an appropriation subcommittee, and that is to get his bill to the floor as clean as he can get it so that it can get the necessary votes on the floor from both sides of the aisle.

I appreciate the way this bill was handled in subcommittee today, especially in contrast to when the District of Columbia appropriation finally got out of the House last year. It was in December, remember. The appropriation year ends September 30. My colleagues can imagine the hardship on our local jurisdiction that does not get its budget until almost Christmas. It was so late even when we got the bill itself out, that was sometime in November, it was held over in order to be the vehicle to carry other appropriations that had had difficulty getting out of committee.

So here we had the spectre of a local jurisdiction not being able to spend its own money while the bill was held hostage for Federal appropriations. It seems to me there is something in reverse order about that, that the smallest appropriation was being held to carry gigantic appropriations like HHS over.

I am deeply grateful that the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HASTERT) helped me get this bill out. I went to his office and described the hardship. I asked Mayor Tony Williams to help me describe it. With the help of the Speaker, we finally got our bill out in December.

What the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KNOLLENBERG) has done is to take a first step toward avoiding any kind of train wreck of that kind for the District of Columbia.

Perhaps it will not happen because, if there are riders on our appropriation, get yourself ready for a fight. But if there are, they certainly will not be there because the chairman has been an enabler of such extraneous, irrelevant, undemocratic riders.

True to his word, the chairman himself respected local decision-making, and the way he did so was by announcing in advance shortly after he assumed the chairmanship that he did not want any riders in his appropriation. I do not think I have heard that for a very long time; but when a chairman says that, I think you will get a lot of respect from Members of the House because he is announcing how he wants his own appropriation to be handled.

He went further. In the Subcommittee on the District of Columbia, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KNOLLENBERG) looked at a project we in the District and I here in the House and with Members of the Senate for a couple years now have been working on.

Since home rule, there have been riders willy-nilly put on the District of Columbia's appropriation that went to operations and went to finances. Many of these are redundant of Federal law. They are redundant of District law. They are so out of date some of them that if they were, in fact, to be acted on they could cause a catastrophe.

What happens is they kind of stay on. The White House, seeing them on, carries them over from year to year; and so there are attachments to the District's appropriation that I think will embarrass this House because they have nothing to do with today. They are ancient. It is as if they were written in the last century.

We thought that such riders could do real harm. Because they are there and until they are gone, you are supposed to do what they say.

The fact that they are redundant or out of date does not mean that you are not supposed to do what they say, and they really cause great confusion in the local community that tries to abide by what indeed the Congress has said.

We worked hard last year while Mr. Clinton was in office and this year as well to see whether we could get the White House to agree with us that certain riders were operational and financial riders were no longer applicable and then to work with the District to see they were no longer applicable.

We did, and to his credit a great many of these riders, 35 of them, have been removed by Chairman KNOLLENBERG.

I regret to say that there are controversial riders that, of course, remain on our appropriation. They have been there for eternity, through Democratic and Republican Houses and

Presidents. They are the kind of riders that hundreds of jurisdictions in the United States of America do not regard as riders at all because they have decided that those are the kinds of things they do not want to do.

Then there are hundreds of jurisdictions that have decided they want to do precisely what the Congress has forbidden us to do, and the chairman of the Subcommittee on the District of Columbia, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KNOLLENBERG), could not do anything about those; and we do not hold him accountable to those.

Those, of course, are riders of the most controversial kind in this House. Riders, for example, under domestic partners that allow domestic partners in the District no matter what their sexual orientation. I guess most of them in the District would not be gay, but would allow a domestic partner to pay for the health benefits of his partner if the person worked for the District government with no cost to the District government.

Hundreds of jurisdictions allow that all across the United States. Many more private corporations allow it. It is a matter of when you consider the cost of health care, seems to me that anybody would want to help somebody get health insurance who wanted to pay for it and get on a group plan, particularly at a time when there are very serious consequences to not doing so.

There is one that this House rebels against that, again, all across the United States can be found. Members, I am sure, will vote against it. Live in places where this is done and, that is, riders allowing the local jurisdiction to pay for abortions for poor women out of its own funds.

Respecting the fact that this body has said you cannot pay for abortions out of Federal funds, you will not find a big city in the United States and many small towns which do not decide to pay for abortions out of their own local funds. Only with your Nation's capital does the Congress say no Federal and no local funds can be used, and they say so for these two items; and they have said so for other matters in the past.

Everybody who votes for it knows it is wrong. They know it flies in the face of Federalism, not to mention devolution. We will continue to fight those. We know that the chairman of the Subcommittee on the District of Columbia, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KNOLLENBERG), was in no position to do anything about them; and the burden is on us to convince this body.

We accept that burden and we must find a way out of that dilemma so that we are treated in exactly the same way as every other jurisdiction in the United States.

I am a fourth generation Washingtonian. I can trace my American ancestry back to virtually the beginning of

the 19th century. The fact that before slavery some of them believed they would find a better life in the District of Columbia and walked off the plantation should not mean that today the District of Columbia has fewer rights than any other local jurisdiction and that nobody in my family for four generations has had the same rights as every other Member of this body. I take it personally. And, of course, I take it as my obligation to do something about it for 600,000 people who live in the District of Columbia.

I want to also pay tribute to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG), the chair of the Committee on Appropriations. Every year the gentleman from Florida tries to help the District of Columbia get its appropriation out. Again he is simply doing his duty as chairman. He wants to get his appropriations through. He has a well-known desire not to have riders cloud up his various subcommittee appropriations, and he does whatever he can to ward them off and to try to facilitate Members in getting their bills through.

I appreciate that the gentleman from Florida has met every year with our new Mayor, actually he is in his third year now, who has done so well in our city, Tony Williams, and tried to help us to design a way to get our appropriation in and out. It ought to be the fastest and the easiest of all 13 appropriations. It is not your money; it is ours. When it comes to the hard work the Members do here, and they do work very hard, you would think that coming to the D.C. appropriation would be a rest period for the Members of this body. Instead, it has tended to be among the most controversial when it affects nobody in this body. I want to say not only that Speaker HASTERT has been very helpful to this city in trying to move the appropriation but the gentleman from Florida has been very helpful as well.

Finally, I must say a word about the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FATTAH), who is the ranking member of the Subcommittee on the District of Columbia. This is the first time that the gentleman from Pennsylvania has been on the Committee on Appropriations at all. He is so clever that he managed to get himself a chairmanship straight off because of the way the bidding is done. But what marvelous good fortune it is for the District of Columbia because the gentleman from Pennsylvania comes from a jurisdiction much like our own. He is the first big-city Member to serve in such a position on our committee since Julian Dixon, the much revered chair of the Subcommittee on the District of Columbia for 14 years who died last year.

The gentleman from Pennsylvania not only comes from a similar jurisdiction just a few hundred miles up the East Coast, but he comes from a jurisdiction that has been through exactly

what the District of Columbia went through about 5 years ago when it had to get a control board. So what we have is a ranking member who was the prime mover in getting a control board for the city of Philadelphia which sprang back as a result of it. Now the District of Columbia has sprung back as a result of both the work of the control board and of our Mayor and city council. We have a ranking member who has a deep understanding of big cities, their finances and their educational systems in particular.

What the gentleman from Pennsylvania brings to the Subcommittee on the District of Columbia is almost instinctive understanding of what should pertain here for this city, an instinctive empathy with residents who live and have to watch as the Congress of the United States doubles back over what its own Mayor and city council have approved in their budget and sometimes in their laws.

And so, Mr. Speaker, thanks to the chairman and the ranking member and the cooperation of the full committee, I might add, the D.C. bill is on its way to full committee. I come to the floor this evening to ask that the full committee show this kind of respect for the independent jurisdiction that is your Nation's capital, the District of Columbia, that the chairman has shown; that we follow his lead and that out of committee come a bill that is at least as clean as the bill was when it was passed off today to the full committee.

Mr. Speaker, we have many miles to go before this session is over. I hope and pray we are not here as long as we were last year. But if we spend a lot of time ruminating about the District of Columbia, we may well be here. You have got yourself a Republican President now. I think he wants to sign bills and not veto them, although I must say unless you get this surplus matter figured out, you are likely to have a Republican President vetoing bills that came from a Republican House. In any case, I want us all to focus on getting out of here and getting these bills, which are already very late, done.

I think that the last thing that should make us tarry is a local jurisdiction unrelated to your own business and your own district. I ask that you respect the work of our chairman, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KNOLLENBERG), allow a clean bill to come out of the full committee and then out of this House. And, of course, I ask you to respect the 600,000 people who live in the Nation's capital, who are second per capita in Federal income taxes and ask of you only that you let them spend their own money as they see fit.

COMMUNICATION FROM STAFF MEMBER OF THE HONORABLE JENNIFER DUNN, MEMBER OF CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON) laid before the House the following communication from Shannon Flaherty, staff assistant to the Honorable JENNIFER DUNN, Member of Congress:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
September 5, 2001.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,  
Speaker, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: This is to notify you formally, pursuant to Rule VIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, that I have been served with a subpoena for testimony issued by the Superior Court of the District of Columbia.

After consultation with the Office of General Counsel, I have determined that compliance with the subpoena is consistent with the privileges and rights of the House.

Sincerely,

SHANNON FLAHERTY,  
Staff Assistant.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. RUSH (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for today on account of a death in the family.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for today on account of personal business.

Mr. OXLEY (at the request of Mr. ARMEY) for today on account of traveling with the President.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

The following Members (at the request of Mr. EVANS) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:

Mr. PALLONE, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DEFazio, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. MALONEY of New York, for 5 minutes, today.

The following Members (at the request of Mr. ISAKSON) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:

Mr. WOLF, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. THUNE, for 5 minutes, today.

The following Members (at their own request) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:

Mr. BOSWELL, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. LEE, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WATSON of California, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, for 5 minutes, today.