

109TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 688

Amending the Rules of the House of Representatives to require that legislation and conference reports be available on the Internet for 72 hours before consideration by the House, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 16, 2006

Mr. BAIRD submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Rules

RESOLUTION

Amending the Rules of the House of Representatives to require that legislation and conference reports be available on the Internet for 72 hours before consideration by the House, and for other purposes.

1 *Resolved,*

2 **SECTION 1. PURPOSE.**

3 The purpose of this resolution is to:

4 (1) Modernize the operations of the House of
5 Representatives using information technology that
6 has transformed and increased the efficiency of
7 many aspects of American society such as financial
8 services and markets, transportation, manufac-

1 turing, agriculture, and commerce with consumers
2 and businesses.

3 (2) Slow the explosive growth of the
4 \$8,000,000,000,000 national debt of the United
5 States, reduce excessive annual budget deficits, and
6 control the size and scope of government by ensuring
7 that there is adequate scrutiny of proposals for new
8 and amended laws, taxes, and expenditures.

9 (3) Enhance public participation in American
10 democracy and improve the quality of proposed leg-
11 islation by allowing the opportunity for its review by
12 State and local government officials, small business
13 owners, large business leaders, journalists, scientists,
14 academics, labor leaders, nonprofit organization
15 leaders, authors of weblogs, and interested citizens.

16 (4) Help restore public trust in government and
17 enhance respect for the House of Representatives
18 and the Congress by ensuring that their operations
19 are conducted with the openness, order, and dignity
20 befitting the world's oldest democracy.

21 **SEC. 2. AMENDMENTS TO RULE XIII REGARDING AVAIL-**
22 **ABILITY OF LEGISLATION AND REPORTS.**

23 (a) Clause 4 of rule XIII of the Rules of the House
24 of Representatives is amended—

1 (1) in its side heading, by inserting “legislation
2 and” before “reports”;

3 (2) by striking subparagraph (1) and inserting
4 the following new subparagraph:

5 “(1) Except as specified in subparagraph (2), it shall
6 not be in order to consider in the House a measure or
7 matter until 72 hours (excluding Saturdays, Sundays and
8 holidays except when the House is in session on such a
9 day) after the text of such measure or matter (and, if the
10 measure or matter is reported, the text of all accom-
11 panying reports) have been made available to Members,
12 Delegates, the Resident Commissioner, and the general
13 public pursuant to subparagraph (3).”;

14 (3) by adding at the end of paragraph (a) the
15 following new subparagraph:

16 “(3) Without further amendment during the 72
17 hours, the full and official text of the measure or matter
18 and each committee report thereon shall be posted con-
19 tinuously by means of the Internet in such a manner that
20 they are conveniently accessible using existing technology,
21 anonymously and at no cost, in a format that is searchable
22 by text.”; and

23 (4) in paragraph (c), by striking “the third cal-
24 endar day” and inserting “at least 72 hours” and by
25 striking “on” and inserting “after”.

1 (b) Rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Represent-
 2 atives is further amended—

3 (1) in clause 5(b), by striking “and the Resi-
 4 dent Commissioner” and inserting “the Resident
 5 Commissioner, and the general public”; and

6 (2) in clause 6(c), by striking “or” at the end
 7 of subparagraph (1), by striking the period at the
 8 end of subparagraph (2) and inserting a semicolon,
 9 and by adding at the end the following new subpara-
 10 graphs:

11 “(3) a rule or order proposing a waiver of
 12 clause 4(a) of rule XIII or of clause 8(a) or 8(b) of
 13 rule XXII, unless a question of consideration of the
 14 rule is adopted by a vote of two-thirds of the Mem-
 15 bers voting, a quorum being present; or

16 “(4) a rule or order proposing a waiver of sub-
 17 paragraph (3), unless a question of consideration of
 18 the rule is adopted by a vote of two-thirds of the
 19 Members voting, a quorum being present.”.

20 **SEC. 3. AMENDMENTS TO RULE XXII REGARDING AVAIL-**
 21 **ABILITY OF CONFERENCE REPORTS AND**
 22 **AMENDMENTS REPORTED IN DISAGREE-**
 23 **MENT.**

24 Clause 8 of rule XXII of the Rules of the House of
 25 Representatives is amended—

1 (1) by striking subparagraph (a) and inserting
2 the following new paragraph:

3 “(a)(1) It shall not be in order to consider a con-
4 ference report until 72 hours (excluding Saturdays, Sun-
5 days and holidays except when the House is in session on
6 such a day) after the conference report and the accom-
7 panying joint explanatory statement have been available
8 to Members, Delegates, the Resident Commissioner, and
9 the general public pursuant to subparagraph (2).

10 “(2) Without further amendment during the 72
11 hours, the full and official texts of the conference report
12 and the accompanying signed joint explanatory statement
13 shall be posted continuously by means of the Internet in
14 such a manner that they are conveniently accessible using
15 existing technology, anonymously and at no cost, in a for-
16 mat that can be searched by text.”;

17 (2) in paragraph (b), by striking subparagraphs
18 (1) and (2) and inserting the following new subpara-
19 graphs:

20 “(1) It shall not be in order to consider a motion to
21 dispose of a Senate amendment reported in disagreement
22 by a conference committee until at least 72 hours (exclud-
23 ing Saturdays, Sundays and holidays except when the
24 House is in session on such a day) after the report in dis-
25 agreement and any accompanying statement have been

1 available to Members, Delegates, the Resident Commis-
2 sioner, and the general public pursuant to subparagraph
3 (2).

4 “(2) Without further amendment during the 72
5 hours, the full and official texts of a Senate amendment
6 reported in disagreement and any accompanying state-
7 ment shall be posted continuously by means of the Inter-
8 net in such a manner that they are conveniently accessible
9 using existing technology, anonymously and at no cost, in
10 a format that can be searched by text.”.

11 **SEC. 4. PROTECTION OF CLASSIFIED INFORMATION.**

12 Nothing in this resolution or any amendment made
13 by it shall be interpreted to require or permit the declas-
14 sification or posting on the Internet of classified informa-
15 tion in the custody of the House of Representatives. Such
16 classified information shall be made available to Members
17 in a timely manner as appropriate under existing laws and
18 rules.

19 **SEC. 5. SENSE OF THE HOUSE REGARDING AMENDMENTS.**

20 It is the sense of the House that, with the objective
21 of preventing circumvention of clause 4(a) of rule XIII of
22 the Rules of the House of Representatives that the Com-
23 mittee on Rules should develop standardized policies and
24 procedures to require that proposed amendments (except
25 those offered under an open rule) that are major in size,

- 1 scope, or cost be posted on the Internet for an appropriate
- 2 number of hours.

