

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GEKAS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself 1 minute just for one purpose, to demonstrate the scope of this compact. I simply want to repeat the States that are part of the compact:

Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia.

Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from South Carolina [Mr. INGLIS], the chief architect of the compact.

Mr. INGLIS of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time, and also I want to thank the gentleman for moving this bill so very quickly through the committee. I certainly appreciate his help in seeing that that is done in a very expeditious way. I also want to thank the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. SCOTT] for his coauthoring this bill. It is something that really we are simply giving effect to the very good work of the Governors Association, Southern Governors Association particularly, and they have worked very hard, folks in South Carolina particularly. Stan McKinney, who is the emergency preparedness director in South Carolina, has worked very hard on this, and I am very happy that we now in the Congress are giving effect to that compact, and to see the cooperation that is happening here today is really refreshing and very rewarding.

So basically, Madam Speaker, this bill accomplishes the approval of the compact entered into among the States that the chairman just read. The compact essentially handles two very important areas that heretofore have been a little bit murky.

First, it deals with the compensation questions about, for example, if South Carolina sends aid to North Carolina after the occurrence of Hurricane Fran, the question is about compensation of the South Carolina National Guard in North Carolina. That is handled by this compact. There is a procedure set up such that South Carolina and North Carolina work that out in advance, and they know how the work is going to be accomplished, how it is going to be paid for.

The second thing that the compact does is it deals with the question of liability for, following that same example, the National Guard troops from South Carolina operating in North Carolina. The question heretofore has been, what kind of liability do those troops have in North Carolina?

This compact, well worked out by the Southern Governors Association, answers that question by saying that when this South Carolina National Guard is in North Carolina at the request of the State of North Carolina, they are agents of the State of North Carolina and, therefore, enjoy sovereign immunity of the State of North Carolina, and it is governed, any ac-

tions there will be governed, by the laws of the State of North Carolina.

All of that accomplishes a great deal because it means that States will now be much more able to send assistance and to know in advance what kind of situation they will find there.

So I think that the Congress is doing a good thing, the House is doing a good thing this day, I hope, in passing this bill in a very expeditious manner, and then hopefully the other body will follow suit very quickly.

The reason that it is important to do this relatively quickly is as, we all know, those of us from coastal States particularly, we are in the midst of hurricane season. We have seen several hurricanes come up the east coast already this year. We hope that no others make their way that way for the rest of the season, but if they do, we will be in a position to help one another and to respond to those emergencies that exist.

Mr. GEKAS. Madam Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. INGLIS of South Carolina. I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

Mr. GEKAS. Madam Speaker, the gentleman may recall that we delved into, during the course of the hearing that we held on this matter, the question of liability insofar as it touched upon volunteers that go from State to State, and I recounted then, and I do now, several instances where my fellow Pennsylvanians went to the aid of the coastal States on many different occasions and were recipients of similar aid. We know that liability here, as he has described it, as the gentleman from South Carolina has described it, has to do with the league of entities, but what about the volunteers? What does the gentleman see? I would like the RECORD to reflect for future proposals or agreements that might be reached on volunteers.

Mr. INGLIS of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for that question. As he knows, during our hearing we discussed the possibility that the States might want to entertain further action under good samaritan laws, such that they could entertain that question or answer that question. It would make a whole lot of sense because, for example, after the aftermath of Hurricane Hugo our State received tremendous assistance from a number of other States, I am sure, including the great State of Pennsylvania, and that is a very significant part of our American experience, is helping people in our places.

So I would say to the gentleman that the work that should go forth there, to answer his question there, has to do with the State legislatures dealing with their good samaritan laws to handle the situation where a volunteer comes into the State of Pennsylvania, for example, from South Carolina to offer assistance, be governed by the good samaritan laws of the State of Pennsylvania. This, of course, is dif-

ferent, in that here in the situation we are describing here, the State of North Carolina may be requesting the State of South Carolina to send its organized National Guard troops to North Carolina, and that is what this compact is.

But I agree with the gentleman that it would be very helpful to have very clear good samaritan laws that deal with a volunteer not under direction of the Governor of the State going to another State to offer assistance.

Mr. GEKAS. Madam Speaker, it strikes me that perhaps the gentleman from South Carolina, the gentleman from Virginia, and I, in the next session, if the electorate so chooses to return us to this Chamber, might want to seek out the same southern Governors' experience to determine perhaps where uniform set of laws among the several States on the good samaritan laws.

Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GUNDERSON). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. GEKAS] that the House suspend the rules and pass the joint resolution, House Joint Resolution 193.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the joint resolution was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GRANTING CONSENT OF CONGRESS TO AMENDMENTS TO WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT REGULATION COMPACT

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the resolution (H.J. Res. 194) granting the consent of the Congress to amendments made by Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Regulation Compact, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.J. RES. 194

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. CONSENT OF CONGRESS TO AMENDMENTS TO COMPACT.

The Congress consents to the amendments of the State of Maryland (chapter 252, 1995 Acts of the Maryland General Assembly and chapter 489, 1996 Laws of Maryland), the amendments of the Commonwealth of Virginia (chapter 150, 1995 Acts of Assembly of Virginia), and the amendments of the District of Columbia (D.C. Law 11-138) of title III of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Regulation Compact. Such amendments are substantially as follows:

(1) Section 3 is amended to read as follows:

“Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Zone

“3. There is hereby created the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Zone which shall embrace the District of Columbia, the cities of Alexandria, Falls Church and Fairfax and the counties of Arlington, Fairfax, and Loudoun and political subdivisions of the Commonwealth of Virginia located within

those counties, and the counties of Montgomery and Prince George's in the State of Maryland and political subdivisions of the State of Maryland located in said counties."

(2) Subsection (a) of section 5 is amended to read as follows:

"(a) The Authority shall be governed by a Board of six Directors consisting of two Directors for each signatory. For Virginia, the Directors shall be appointed by the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission; for the District of Columbia, by the Council of the District of Columbia; and for Maryland, by the Washington Suburban Transit Commission. For Virginia and Maryland, the Directors shall be appointed from among the members of the appointing body, except as otherwise provided herein, and shall serve for a term coincident with their term on the appointing body. A Director may be removed or suspended from office only as provided by the law of the signatory from which he was appointed. The appointing authorities shall also appoint an alternate for each Director, who may act only in the absence of the Director for whom he has been appointed an alternate, except that, in the case of the District of Columbia where only one Director and his alternate are present, such alternate may act on behalf of the absent Director. Each alternate shall serve at the pleasure of the appointing authority. In the event of a vacancy in the Office of Director or alternate, it shall be filled in the same manner as an original appointment."

(3) Subsection (a) of section 8 is amended to read as follows:

"(a) Four Directors or alternates consisting of at least one Director or alternate appointed from each Signatory, shall constitute a quorum and no action by the Board shall be effective unless a majority of the Board present and voting, which majority shall include at least one Director or alternate from each Signatory, concur therein; provided, however, that a plan of financing may be adopted or a mass transit plan adopted, altered, revised or amended by the unanimous vote of the Directors representing any two Signatories."

(4) Subsection (b) of section 14 is amended to read as follows:

"(b) It shall be the duty and responsibility of each member of the Board to serve as liaison between the Board and the body which appointed him to the Board. To provide a framework for regional participation in the planning process, the Board shall create technical committees concerned with planning and collection and analyses of data relative to decision-making in the transportation planning process and the Mayor and Council of the District of Columbia, the component governments of the Northern Virginia Transportation District and the Washington Suburban Transit District shall appoint representatives to such technical committees and otherwise cooperate with the Board in the formulation of a mass transit plan, or in revisions, alterations or amendments thereof."

(5)(A) Paragraph (1) of subsection (a) of section 15 is amended to read as follows:

"(1) The Mayor and Council of the District of Columbia, the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission and the Washington Suburban Transit Commission;"

(B) Paragraph (3) of subsection (a) of section 15 is amended to read as follows:

"(3) the transportation agencies of the signatories;"

(C) The last paragraph of section 15 is amended to read as follows:

"(b) A copy of the proposed mass transit plan, amendment or revision, shall be kept at the office of the Board and shall be available for public inspection. Information with respect thereto shall be released to the pub-

lic. After thirty days' notice published once a week for two successive weeks in one or more newspapers of general circulation within the zone, a public hearing shall be held with respect to the proposed plan, alteration, revision or amendment. The thirty days' notice shall begin to run on the first day the notice appears in any such newspaper. The Board shall consider the evidence submitted and statements and comments made at such meeting and may make any changes in the proposed plan, amendment or revision which it deems appropriate and such changes may be made without further hearing."

(6) Subsection (a) of section 70 is amended to read as follows:

"(a) As soon as practical after the closing of the fiscal year, an audit shall be made of the financial accounts of the Authority. The audit shall be made by qualified certified public accountants selected by the Board, who shall have no personal interest direct or indirect in the financial affairs of the Authority or any of its officers or employees. The report of audit shall be prepared in accordance with generally accepted auditing principles and shall be filed with the Chairman and other officers as the Board shall direct. Copies of the report shall be distributed to each Director, to the Congress, to the Mayor and Council of the District of Columbia, to the Governors of Virginia and Maryland, to the Washington Suburban Transit Commission, to the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission and to the governing bodies of the political subdivisions located within the Zone which are parties to commitments for participation in the financing of the Authority and shall be made available for public distribution."

(7) Section 73 is amended to read as follows:

"Contracting and Purchasing

"73. (a)(1) Except as provided in subsections (b), (c), and (f) of this section, and except in the case of procurement procedures otherwise expressly authorized by statute, the Authority in conducting a procurement of property, services, or construction shall:

"(A) obtain full and open competition through the use of competitive procedures in accordance with the requirements of this Section; and

"(B) use the competitive procedure or combination of competitive procedures that is best suited under the circumstances of the procurement.

"(2) In determining the competitive procedure appropriate under the circumstances, the Authority shall:

"(A) solicit sealed bids if:

"(i) time permits the solicitation, submission, and evaluation of sealed bids;

"(ii) the award will be made on the basis of price and other price-related factors;

"(iii) it is not necessary to conduct discussions with the responding sources about their bids; and

"(iv) there is a reasonable expectation of receiving more than one sealed bid; or

"(B) request competitive proposals if sealed bids are not appropriate under clause (A) of this paragraph.

"(b) The Authority may provide for the procurement of property, services, or construction covered by this Section using competitive procedures but excluding a particular source in order to establish or maintain an alternative source or sources of supply for that property, service, or construction if the Authority determines that excluding the source would increase or maintain competition and would likely result in reduced overall costs for procurement of property, services, or construction.

"(c) The Authority may use procedures other than competitive procedures if:

"(1) the property, services, or construction needed by the Authority is available from only one responsible source and no other type of property, services, or construction will satisfy the needs of the Authority; or

"(2) the Authority's need for the property, services, or construction is of such an unusual and compelling urgency that the Authority would be seriously injured unless the Authority limits the number of sources from which it solicits bids or proposals; or

"(3) the Authority determines that it is necessary in the public interest to use procedures other than competitive procedures in the particular procurement; or

"(4) the property or services can be obtained through federal or other governmental sources at reasonable prices.

"(d) For the purpose of applying subsection (c)(1) of this section:

"(1) in the case of a contract for property, services, or construction to be awarded on the basis of acceptance of an unsolicited proposal, the property, services, or construction shall be deemed to be available from only one responsible source if the source has submitted an unsolicited proposal that demonstrates a concept:

"(A) that is unique and innovative or, in the case of a service, for which the source demonstrates a unique capability to provide the service; and

"(B) the substance of which is not otherwise available to the Authority and does not resemble the substance of a pending competitive procurement.

"(2) in the case of a follow-on contract for the continued development or production of a major system or highly specialized equipment or the continued provision of highly specialized services, the property, services, or construction may be deemed to be available from only the original source and may be procured through procedures other than competitive procedures if it is likely that award to a source other than the original source would result in:

"(A) substantial duplication of cost to the Authority that is not expected to be recovered through competition; or

"(B) unacceptable delays in fulfilling the Authority's needs.

"(e) If the Authority uses procedures other than competitive procedures to procure property, services, or construction under subsection (c)(2) of this section, the Authority shall request offers from as many potential sources as is practicable under the circumstances.

"(f)(1) To promote efficiency and economy in contracting, the Authority may use simplified acquisition procedures for purchases of property, services and construction.

"(2) For the purposes of this subsection, simplified acquisition procedures may be used for purchases for an amount that does not exceed the simplified acquisition threshold adopted by the Federal Government.

"(3) A proposed purchase or contract for an amount above the simplified acquisition threshold may not be divided into several purchases or contracts for lesser amounts in order to use the procedures under paragraph (1) of this subsection.

"(4) In using simplified acquisition procedures, the Authority shall promote competition to the maximum extent practicable.

"(g) The Board shall adopt policies and procedures to implement this Section. The policies and procedures shall provide for publication of notice of procurements and other actions designed to secure competition where competitive procedures are used.

"(h) The Authority in its discretion may reject any and all bids or proposals received in response to a solicitation."

(8) Section 81 is amended to read as follows:

"Jurisdiction of Courts

"81. The United States District Courts shall have original jurisdiction, concurrent with the Courts of Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia, of all actions brought by or against the Authority and to enforce subpoenas issued under this Title. Any such action initiated in a State or District of Columbia Court shall be removable to the appropriate United States District Court in the manner provided by Act of June 25, 1948, as amended (28 U.S.C. 1446)."

(9) Section 84 is amended to read as follows:

"Amendments and Supplements

"84. Amendments and supplements to this Title to implement the purposes thereof may be adopted by legislative action of any of the signatory parties concurred in by all of the others. When one signatory adopts an amendment or supplement to an existing section of the Compact, that amendment shall not be immediately effective, and the previously enacted provision(s) shall remain in effect in each jurisdiction until the amendment or supplement is approved by the other signatories and is consented to by Congress."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. GEKAS] and the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. SCOTT] each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. GEKAS].

□ 1515

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GUNDERSON). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Pennsylvania?

There was no objection.

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of House Joint Resolution 194, as amended, and urge its adoption. The gentleman from Virginia [Mr. DAVIS] has very expertly presented to the committee a full review of the existing structure about which we speak here today on the Transit Authority, and also about the problems that it has met over the last several years. His testimony went a long way in projecting us to this moment on the floor with respect to this compact.

I repeat that the Constitution requires that when two or more States enter into any kind of an agreement which flows into a compact, as it were, then that compact, that contract, must be approved by the Congress. Thus, we have the States of Virginia and of Maryland cooperating with the District of Columbia in ferreting out a series of problems and advantages that can be gained or met by the existence of this authority. The gentleman from Virginia [Mr. DAVIS] will elucidate the RECORD on the need for this particular compact.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SCOTT. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of the joint resolution, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, House Joint Resolution 194 would grant the consent of Congress to the amendments to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Regulation Compact. Mr. Speaker, as has already been indicated, this consent is needed because the Constitution requires congressional consent for compacts between States, and obviously this involves Maryland, Virginia, as well as the District of Columbia.

The compact has been amended five times since its creation in 1967. The amendments before us today primarily conform the procurement practices to recently enacted Federal procurement reforms. The amendments have been approved by the State of Maryland, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the District of Columbia. House Joint Resolution 194 was introduced by my colleague, the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. DAVIS], and was cosponsored by all of the Members representing the Washington Metropolitan Area.

Mr. Speaker, House Joint Resolution 194 was reported by the Subcommittee on Commercial and Administrative Law by a voice vote, and I know of no opposition to this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. DAVIS].

Mr. DAVIS. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend for yielding time to me.

Mr. Speaker, the resolution before us today, House Joint Resolution 194, would grant the consent of Congress to amendments made by the Commonwealth of Virginia, the State of Maryland, and the District of Columbia to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Regulation Compact. The Compact Amendments that are being proposed today govern how the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority [WMATA], better known as Metro, conducts its daily operations as a transit provider.

The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority was established in 1967 by Congress when it consented to an Interstate Compact created by Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia. The authority was established to plan, finance, construct, and operate a comprehensive public transit system for the Metropolitan Washington area. Today, Metro operates 1,439 buses and 764 rail cars serving the entire National Capital region. The Metrorail system, sometimes called America's Subway has 89 miles and 74 stations currently in service. Over the next several years, Metro will construct another 13.5 miles of the rail system, with the planned 103-mile rail system being completed in 2001.

The WMATA Compact has been amended five times since its inception. The amendments that are before the House today are a sixth set of amend-

ments that will enable the transit agency to perform its functions more efficiently and cost effectively.

DESCRIPTION OF AMENDMENTS

The proposed amendments primarily, and most importantly, modify the Authority's procurement practices to conform with recently enacted Federal procurement reforms. Currently, the Authority must use a sealed bid process in purchasing capital items. As you can imagine, the Authority conducts extensive procurements in constructing the rail system. The proposed amendments will enable Metro to engage in competitive negotiations on capital contracts, as an alternative to the sealed bid process. This amendment is particularly important as a means for the Authority to reduce its costs.

The transit agency will be better able to define selection criteria and eliminate costly items from bid proposals. If a prospective contractor recommends a change in a bid specification, under the proposed amendment the Authority will be able to take advantage of this cost savings.

The proposed amendment will also allow the Authority to raise its simplified purchasing ceiling from \$10,000 to the Federal level. The Federal Transit Administration, part of the U.S. Department of Transportation, has encouraged States and localities to raise the dollar threshold for small purchases to \$100,000 to come into conformity with Federal procedures. The Authority and the jurisdictions it serves strongly endorse this proposed amendment, allowing the Authority to conduct its business in an efficient, businesslike manner, rather than being required to publish voluminous bid specifications, even on small purchases. Under this revision, WMATA will be able to publish a simplified bid specification and accept price quotations, thus streamlining its procurement procedures. Given inflation rates over the past several years, this amendment provides a much better definition of "small purchase" for a Government agency.

Finally, there are several administrative matters addressed in the proposed Compact Amendments that are certainly of a housekeeping nature. These amendments are largely codifications and clarifications of current practices. They relate to, for example, the primacy of D.C. Superior Court in cases involving WMATA, and the definition of a quorum at WMATA Board meetings.

In closing, I would like to thank the Judiciary Committee and its Subcommittee on Commercial and Administrative Law for their expeditious handling of this resolution. These amendments are of the utmost importance to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.

I appreciate the Judiciary Committee's willingness to move this matter along so that we can assist the Authority in its constant effort to reduce costs. As Metro reduces its cost, it can

use its limited public resources to provide more and better service to the citizens of the national capital region and to the millions of visitors to the Washington area each year. I hope my colleagues will join me in supporting House Joint Resolution 194.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would like to thank the Committee on the Judiciary and its Subcommittee on Commercial and Administrative Law for their expeditious handling of this resolution. These amendments are of the utmost importance to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.

To the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. GEKAS] and to the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. SCOTT], who has been a long-time supporter of this system in the State legislature, I appreciate their willingness to move this matter along so we can assist the authority in its constant efforts to reduce costs. As Metro reduces its costs, it can use its limited public resources to provide more and better services to the citizens of the Nation's capital and to the region and to the millions of visitors to the Washington area each year. I ask for its support.

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of House Joint Resolution 194 which will help the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority [WMATA] conduct its daily business in a more efficient and cost-effective manner. The proposed amendments already have been approved by the State of Maryland, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the District of Columbia. The consent of Congress is required in order for the amendments to become effective.

WMATA, more commonly known as Metro, was created in 1967 when Maryland, Virginia, and the District entered into an interstate compact which was approved by Congress. This is the fifth action to amend the WMATA compact since its inception.

The amendments contain several house-keeping measures which are largely clarifications of current practices mainly of interest to the Authority. The most important amendment would modify the Authority's procurement practices to comply with recently enacted Federal procurement reforms. The Authority has been using a sealed bid process to purchase capital items. Metro's procurement process has been called an anachronism by the Federal Transit Administration [FTA] and it's time for a change. House Joint Resolution 194 will allow Metro to engage in competitive negotiations on capital contracts, as an alternative to the sealed bid process. Most importantly, this alternative will allow WMATA to reduce its costs.

In addition, the proposed amendment will allow WMATA to raise the ceiling on simplified purchasing from \$10,000 to \$100,000 which conforms with Federal procedures. This will allow Metro to cut out several costly steps in the procurement process for small purchases.

I want to praise and thank Congressman TOM DAVIS for his efforts to bring these important amendments to the House floor in a timely manner. It is important to help Metro reduce its costs in order to provide more and even better service to commuters in the Washington metropolitan region and to the thousands of visitors to the Nation's Capitol each year.

Americans visiting Washington surely will be impressed by the safe, clean, reliable system they will use to reach the Smithsonian Museums, the White House, and Capitol Hill.

AMENDMENTS TO THE WMATA INTERSTATE COMPACT FACT SHEET

BACKGROUND

The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority was created in 1967 by the State of Maryland, the Commonwealth of Virginia, the District of Columbia entering into an Interstate Compact consented to by the U.S. Congress. The Authority was created to plan, finance, construct and operate a comprehensive public transit system for the metropolitan Washington area. The Compact has been amended four times since its inception. The Authority is proposing a fifth set of amendments to the Compact in order to allow the transit agency to perform its functions more efficiently and cost effectively.

The proposed amendments have been enacted by the three signatories (Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia) and require the consent of the Congress in order for the amendments to become effective.

PROCUREMENT REFORM

The most important proposed amendment modifies the Authority's procurement practices to conform with recently enacted Federal procurement reforms. Currently, the Authority must use a sealed bid process on capital items. The proposed amendment will enable the Authority to engage in competitive negotiations on capital contracts, as an alternative to the sealed bid process, resulting in a far more flexible and productive contracting system. This amendment will allow the Authority to essentially do more with less, by reducing paperwork and the time involved in the procurement process.

During the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) review of the WMATA procurement process, the Authority's procurement approach was cited as an "anachronism". The FTA's regulations have allowed competitive procurement since enactment of the Federal Competition in Contracting Act in 1984.

The proposed changes will result in the Authority having fewer bid rejections and cancellations of solicitations. WMATA will be better able to define selection criteria and eliminate costly items from bids. If a prospective contractor recommends a way to change the specification to reduce the costs of that procurement, the Authority will be able to take advantage of this cost savings.

The proposed amendment will also allow the Authority to raise the ceiling on simplified purchasing from \$10,000 to the federal level. The FTA has published a circular encouraging States and localities to raise the dollar threshold for small purchases to \$100,000 to come into conformity with federal procedures. This amendment will enable the Authority to eliminate several costly steps in the procurement process for small purchases, such as printing a voluminous invitation for bid and waiting 30 days for bids. Instead, WMATA will be able to publish a simplified bid specification and accept written or oral price quotations. Given inflation over the past two decades, the proposed simplified purchasing procedures provide a more accurate definition of small purchase.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

The Amendments contain several "house-keeping" matters of interest to the Authority. These amendments are largely codifications and clarifications of current practices including:

Designation of Loudoun County as being within the Transit Zone. This codifies an ex-

isting agreement between WMATA and Loudoun County to include the county in the WMATA transit service area.

Deletes references to the Commissioners of the District of Columbia.

Clarifies that where a quorum of the WMATA Board is present, a majority of the quorum may take action, if each signatory is represented among the prevailing vote.

Codifying the current understanding that the Superior Court of the District of Columbia has original jurisdiction concerning WMATA cases.

Mr. SCOTT. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GUNDERSON). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. GEKAS] that the House suspend the rules and pass the joint resolution, House Joint Resolution 194, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended, and the joint resolution, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SENSE OF CONGRESS REGARDING BOMBING IN DHAHRAN, SAUDI ARABIA

Mr. SPENCE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 200) expressing the sense of the Congress regarding the bombing in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 200

Whereas on June 25, 1996, a terrorist truck bomb outside a military housing compound in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, killed 19 members of the Armed Forces and wounded hundreds of others;

Whereas the members of the Armed Forces killed and wounded in the bombing were defending the national security interests of the United States;

Whereas the defense of United States national interests continues to require the forward deployment of members of the Armed Forces to other countries;

Whereas the members of the Armed Forces are called upon to perform duties that place their lives at risk from terrorist elements hostile to the United States;

Whereas global terrorism has demonstrated no respect for the historic rules of war, no reluctance to strike against innocent and defenseless individuals, and a willingness to engage in tactics against which conventional defenses are difficult;

Whereas it is the duty of the President and the military chain of command to take all necessary steps to keep members of the Armed Forces protected and as safe as the nature of their mission permits;

Whereas the people of the United States stand with those who have volunteered to serve their country and grieve at the loss of those who, to quote Lincoln, "have given their last full measure of devotion" to the security and well-being of the United States;

Whereas those members of the Armed Forces serving in Saudi Arabia and around the world demonstrate valor and a faith in the American way of life that reflects honorably not only on themselves but upon the country that they represent; and