

EXPLANATION OF VOTES DURING  
MEDICAL ABSENCE**HON. BOB RILEY**

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Sunday, November 9, 1997*

Mr. RILEY. Mr. Speaker, for medical reasons, I was absent during the following rollcall votes. Had I been present, I would have been recorded in the following manner.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 1997

On rollcall No. 572, a bill to require the Secretary of the Interior to exchange certain lands located in Hinsdale County, CO, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall No. 573, a bill to establish nationally uniform requirements regarding the titling and registration of salvage, nonrepairable, and rebuilt vehicles, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall No. 574, a bill to reaffirm the Federal relationship of the Burt Lake Band as a distinct federally recognized Indian tribe, I would have voted "nay."

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 1997

On rollcall No. 575, a motion to approve the Journal, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall No. 576, a quorum call, I would have voted "present."

On rollcall No. 577, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to restructure and reform the Internal Revenue Service, I would have voted "aye."

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 2676, legislation that will once and for all establish a taxpayer bill of rights. Our Tax Code has grown from 11,400 words in 1913, to 5.5 million words in the current code. Enough is enough. The Tax Code is too complicated and too hard to understand for most Americans. Each year, Americans spend more than 5 billion hours and \$157 billion preparing their tax returns.

It is time to reign in the IRS, which too often seems to operate as if it's above the law. Recent hearings in both the House and Senate have shown that the IRS will stop at almost nothing in its harassment of law-abiding citizens. With its vast array unchecked powers it is not surprising that the IRS has used its authority to needlessly destroy families, close businesses, put people out of work, and shatter dreams. Unfortunately, current law makes it impossible for innocent taxpayers to fight back.

I think a recent Newsweek Magazine article said it best: The IRS has too much muscle, too much money, and too little oversight. The agency is out of control and it is not going to fix itself. Only Congress can do that. In my view, we should overhaul—if not eventually abolish—the IRS.

Then we should scrap the Tax Code and replace it with one that is fairer and flatter.

Today, the House has an opportunity to take an important first step. By passing H.R. 2676, the Internal Revenue Service Restructuring and Reform Act, we can show the American people that their Government exists to serve them, not itself. This bill will rein in the out-of-control monster that the IRS has become. It will create new administrative and oversight structures, and it will give taxpayers new protections and rights. More importantly, H.R. 2676 will shift the burden of proof from the taxpayers to the IRS. In other words, the

IRS will no longer be free to harass the American people.

For too long, Mr. Speaker, the table has been tilted in favor of the IRS. As result, the IRS has abused its power and mistreated millions of taxpayers. I, like the American people, won't stand for it any longer. As an elected official and a representative of the people, neither should you.

On rollcall No. 578, on agreeing to the rule, I would have voted "aye."

Mr. Speaker, over the last few weeks, Congress has been engulfed in a debate about China. The House will consider nine legislative initiatives that focus directly on China. This Policy for Freedom initiative includes legislation that attempts to deal with the Chinese sale of military hardware, the Chinese Government's inability to protect intellectual property rights, the Government's failure to accept different religions, and human rights. These debates, which have been continuing since Nixon re-established relations in the 1960's and the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre, are particularly poignant this week because of the formal meetings this week between Mr. Jiang Zemin, the President of the People's Republic of China [PRC] and President Clinton.

Mr. Speaker, I firmly believe that we must closely examine our relationship with China. There are human rights violations and atrocities being committed in China that are too horrible to ignore. Innocent people are being persecuted because of their religious beliefs. Sadly, people who step outside the prescribed bounds are dealt with in a draconian manner—monasteries in Tibet are defamed and burned, Christians in Singapore are arrested, and religious dissidents throughout all of China are prohibited from expressing their beliefs.

In addition to religious persecution, China has exchanged high technology military hardware with rogue countries that threaten Middle East and Near East peace. China has knowingly sold precision cruise missiles to Iraq and continued to share nuclear secrets with North Korea, despite vehement opposition from the United States. China has routinely ignored intellectual property rights of individuals and corporations, allowing copyright pirates to market merchandise without paying the creators.

I am pleased that Congress will take up nine bills this week that will send a message to the Chinese Government. America is the beacon of democracy and freedom for the world. We have a moral obligation to stand up to those who dismiss the protection of human rights and those who refuse to protect and preserve the sanctity of life. We in Congress cannot sit here with the knowledge that innocent people are being targeted by an authoritarian and repressive regime. The failure of the U.S. Congress to act would send a message of appeasement and blindness to the Communist Government of China. We must stand up for our beliefs or we betray the ideals for which we were elected to champion. Mr. Speaker, it is my hope that Congress sees the value within the Policy for Freedom and passes these bills so that the people and Government of China know that we here in the United States are not going to turn a blind eye to actions of China.

On rollcall No. 579, an amendment to extend the congressional review period for licensing nuclear exports to China from 30 to

120 days and to provide for expedited procedures for consideration of a joint resolution of disapproval for any licensing, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall No. 580, a bill to provide for improved monitoring of human rights violations in the Peoples Republic of China, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall No. 581, a motion to table the motion to appeal the ruling of the Chair, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall No. 582, a bill to provide for certain measures to increase monitoring of products of the People's Republic of China that are made with forced labor, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall No. 583, a motion to table the measure, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall No. 584, a motion to adjourn, I would have voted "aye."

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 1997

On rollcall No. 585, a motion to adjourn, I would have voted "nay."

On rollcall No. 586, a motion to adjourn, I would have voted "nay."

On rollcall No. 587, on ordering the previous question, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall No. 588, a motion to table the motion to reconsider the vote, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall No. 589, a rule waiving a requirement of clause 4(b) of rule XI with respect to consideration of certain resolutions reported from the Committee on Rules, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall No. 590, a motion to table the motion to reconsider, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall No. 591, a motion to adjourn, I would have voted "nay."

On rollcall No. 592, a bill urging the executive branch to take action regarding the acquisition by Iran of C-802 cruise missiles, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall No. 593, a motion to table the motion to reconsider, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall No. 594, a motion to adjourn, I would have voted "nay."

On rollcall No. 595, a bill to prohibit the use of United States funds to provide for the participation of certain Chinese officials in international conferences, programs, and activities and to provide that certain Chinese officials shall be ineligible to receive visas and excluded from admission to the United States, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall No. 596, a motion to table the motion to reconsider, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall No. 597, a motion to adjourn, I would have voted "nay."

On rollcall No. 598, a bill to condemn those officials of the Chinese Communist Party, the Government of the Peoples Republic of China, and other persons involved in the enforcement of forced abortions by preventing such persons from entering or remaining in the United States, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall No. 599, a motion to table the motion to reconsider, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall No. 600, a motion to adjourn, I would have voted "nay."

On rollcall No. 601, a bill to implement the provisions of the Taiwan Relations Act concerning the stability and security of Taiwan and United States cooperation with Taiwan on

the development and acquisition of defensive military articles, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall No. 602, a motion to table the motion to reconsider, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall No. 603, a motion to adjourn, I would have voted "nay."

On rollcall No. 604, a motion to appeal the ruling of the Chair, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall No. 605, a bill to require the United States to oppose the making of concessional loans by international financial institutions to any entity in Peoples Republic of China, I would have voted "aye."

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 1997

On rollcall No. 606, a motion to adjourn, I would have voted "nay."

On rollcall No. 607, a bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 1998 for intelligence and intelligence related activities of the U.S. Government, the community management account, and the Central Intelligence Agency retirement and disability system, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall No. 608, a motion that the Committee rise, I would have voted "nay."

On rollcall No. 609, a motion that the Committee rise, I would have voted "nay."

On rollcall No. 610, an amendment to strike provisions in the bill that identify specific priorities for charter school grant funding to states that meet certain requirements, I would have voted "nay."

On rollcall No. 611, a bill to amend titles VI and X of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to improve and expand charter schools, I would have voted "aye."

Mr. Speaker, Americans want charter schools. Why? Because charter schools work. They work because they allow parents, teachers and communities demand something new from students—academic excellence and discipline—without interference from Federal and State education bureaucracies.

Charter schools are gaining popularity across the Nation. Today, 30 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico have passed legislation allowing charter schools to open. This fall, nearly 700 schools are in operation, serving more than 170,000 students. Many more are waiting for State approval.

The charter schools movement is simple. First, under the charter school arrangement, parents and teachers are freed from the bureaucratic restrictions of traditional schools. Ideally, this means that the charter school is not bound to the State's codes for educational curriculum, personnel, scheduling, or financial administration. In other words, parents and teachers—not bureaucrats in the State capitol or Washington—are free to decide how to best to run their schools. In return, these new school entrepreneurs are held accountable for results, namely high student achievement.

Unfortunately, there are significant barriers between these innovative schools and success. The most daunting of these barriers require access to start-up capital flexible State laws that will encourage the establishment of charter schools. I believe that H.R. 2616, the Charter Schools Amendments Act of 1997, will help new charter schools overcome these barriers.

Specifically, this legislation will help improve the process of creating new charter schools in more States. For the first time, States will be given incentives to adopt stronger charter school laws. Under H.R. 2616, States that

give local school administrators a high degree of fiscal autonomy will be eligible to receive increased funding for their charter school programs. Additionally, these States must also agree to increase the number of charter schools allowed to open each year and provide for academic accountability. H.R. 2616, also ensures that charter school grant money actually gets to the classroom. Under the bill, at least 95 percent of Federal charter school funds go to the State and local level.

Mr. Speaker, the charter schools movement has grown out of the need and demand for parental and teacher control of public schools. With their wide acceptance from both educators and parents, charter schools can no longer be considered an experiment in education reform. They are the future of education reform. For this reason, I strongly support H.R. 2616.

On rollcall No. 612, a motion to table the motion to reconsider, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall No. 613, a bill to ensure that commercial activities of the People's Liberation Army of China or any Communist Chinese military company in the United States are monitored and are subject to the authorities under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall No. 614, a bill making appropriations for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1998, I would have voted "nay."

Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition H.R. 2264. While this legislation does include critical Hyde amendment language that will prevent Federal funding of abortions through State managed health plans I am concerned about several provisions of the bill. I am also pleased that this bill did not include funding for the President's misguided national testing program, but did include \$20 million for charter schools. However, H.R. 2264 does include a \$5 million increase in title X funding a \$273 million increase from the President's budget request and \$5.7 billion more than the fiscal year 1997 bill, and finally an unacceptable compromise on needle exchange programs.

The original House version of H.R. 2264 contained a critical provision that would have banned Federal funding of needle exchange programs for drug abusers. In my opinion, Federal funds should not be used to encourage or support illegal drug abuse. Accordingly, I stand in opposition to the conference report.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 1997

On rollcall No. 617, a bill disapproving the cancellations transmitted by the President on October 6, 1997, regarding military construction appropriations, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall No. 618, a bill to reform, extend, and repeal certain agricultural research, extension, and education programs, and for other purposes, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall No. 619, a bill to allow the Medal of Honor to be awarded to Robert R. Ingram of Jacksonville, FL, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall No. 620, a bill to increase the child care credit for lower-income working parents, and for other purposes, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall No. 621, a motion to adjourn, I would have voted "aye."

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of House Resolution 122, the Tactile Currency for the Blind and Visually Impaired Act. I am an original co-

sponsor of this legislation, which encourages the Bureau of Engraving and Printing to make cost-effective design changes to this Nation's currency so that it will be better identifiable by the blind and visually impaired.

I strongly believe that it is important that the visually impaired in this country are given the opportunity to have a better chance at living independently by making their money more accessible to them.

Mr. Speaker, tactile marks will make an important difference in the lives of the visually impaired, including those individuals involved in programs offered by exceptional organizations like the Alabama Institute for the Blind and Deaf in Talladega, AL, and its associated programs within the Alabama School for the Blind, The Helen Keller School of Alabama, the E.H. Gentry Technical Facility, and the Alabama Industries for the Blind.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the visually impaired because it is vitally important that every individual in this country is given an equal chance to live his or her life at the best of his or her capacity.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 1997

On rollcall No. 622, a motion to table, I would have voted "aye."

TRIBUTE TO GEMILIA HALL HERRING AND RUTH HALL WILKERSON

**HON. WILLIAM M. THOMAS**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Sunday, November 9, 1997*

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, the African-American Network of Kern County hosted its seventh annual Community Awards Night on November 8, 1997, and selected several outstanding Kern County citizens in recognition of their lifelong efforts to improve the way of life that thousands of people, young and old, black and white, enjoy.

Gemilia Hall Herring and Ruth Hall Wilkerson are recipients of the African-American Network of Kern County's 1997 Historical Award. This award is given in recognition of the efforts of those who preserve and promote understanding of the history of the African-American pioneers of Bakersfield.

These two women, grandchildren of Mary and Willis Monroe Hall who were Kern County pioneers in 1884, have provided outstanding service to their community as founding members of the Allenworth Historical Park and Museum in Kern County. Named after Colonel Allenworth, who in the 1860's became the highest ranking black man in the U.S. Army, the park has for the past 22 years presented the historical significance of the African-Americans who came as pioneers to Kern County and those that followed in their footsteps.

Over the years, Gemilia Hall Herring and Ruth Hall Wilkerson have raised and loved families, but their love and respect for their heritage has been a bonus for all of us in Kern County. We thank them for giving of their talent and time to ensure that none of us forget the legacy that came before.

The women I honor here are leaders at home, but often through their quiet bearing, are not recognized. We salute them.