

Mr. BOEHLERT. I thank the gentleman from Wisconsin [Mr. SENSENBRENNER], the chairman, for that response.

Further, section 2(c) provides for the study of disaster-response training by FEMA. The purpose of this study is to inform the Congress on the adequacy of training for earthquake response. However, it is my understanding this section is not intended to change or otherwise affect the authority for, or implementation of, disaster preparedness training programs. NEHRP does not currently provide authority for such training, and there is no intention that this section is meant to provide such authority. Is that correct?

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will continue to yield, the gentleman is correct again.

Mr. BOEHLERT. I thank the chairman, and I urge my colleagues to support this well-crafted bipartisan bill.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Wisconsin [Mr. SENSENBRENNER] that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill, S. 910.

The question was taken.

Mr. CONDIT. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 5, rule I, and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on S. 910, the bill just considered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Wisconsin?

There was no objection.

AUTHORIZING USE OF CAPITOL ROTUNDA TO ALLOW MEMBERS OF CONGRESS TO RECEIVE HIS ALL HOLINESS PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 134) authorizing the use of the rotunda of the Capitol to allow Members of Congress to greet and receive His All Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 134

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring). That the rotunda of the Capitol is authorized to be used on October 21, 1997, from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon for a ceremony to allow Members of Congress to greet and receive His All Holiness Patriarch

Bartholomew, the 270th Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, Physical preparations for the conduct of the ceremony shall be carried out in accordance with such conditions as may be prescribed by the Architect of the Capitol.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. NEY] and the gentlewoman from Michigan [Ms. KILPATRICK] each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. NEY].

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

This resolution provides for the use of the rotunda on October 21, 1997, for a ceremony to allow Members of Congress to greet and receive His All Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew, the 270th Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople.

At the request of the resolution's sponsor, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. BILIRAKIS], the resolution has been amended to change the time of the ceremony from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m.

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

Ms. KILPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. NEY] and concur with his resolution.

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

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield as much time as he may consume to the gentleman from Florida [Mr. BILIRAKIS].

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. NEY] for yielding me the time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of House Concurrent Resolution 134. Mr. Speaker, this bipartisan legislation authorizes the use of the Capitol rotunda for a ceremony where Members of Congress may receive His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, the Archbishop of Constantinople and new Rome.

The Ecumenical Patriarch occupies the foremost position among the National Autocephalous Orthodox Churches worldwide and has the responsibility to coordinate the affairs of the Russian, Eastern Europe, Middle and Far Eastern churches. He is the spiritual leader of nearly 300 million Orthodox Christians worldwide, including approximately 5 million people in the United States.

It is important that Members of Congress, as leaders of a nation that was built on religious freedom and tolerance, have an opportunity to receive and honor one of the world's pre-eminent religious leaders. Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew not only promotes peace and religious understanding throughout the world, but he is also profoundly committed to preserving and protecting the environment. In fact, he has sponsored a conference on the environment at the Theological School of Halki. Today, as the 270th

successor to Apostle Andrew, His All Holiness continues his efforts on behalf of religious freedom and human rights.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Speaker GINGRICH; the gentleman from California Mr. THOMAS, chairman of the Committee on House Oversight, the gentleman from Connecticut Mr. GEJDENSON, the ranking member, and the gentleman from Texas Mr. ARMEY, the majority leader, for their efforts toward bringing this resolution to the floor of the House of Representatives.

I also want to express certainly my appreciation to the members of the Hellenic Caucus for their support of this resolution as well as H.R. 2248, the recommendation to award the Patriarch with a Congressional Gold Medal.

In closing, I urge my colleagues to support this most bipartisan legislation.

Ms. KILPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I yield as much time as he may consume to the distinguished gentleman from California [Mr. CAPPS].

Mr. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Michigan [Ms. KILPATRICK] for yielding me the time.

I do want to thank the sponsors of this resolution, the gentleman from California [Mr. THOMAS], the gentleman from Connecticut [Mr. GEJDENSON], the gentleman from Florida [Mr. BILIRAKIS], the Hellenic Caucus and everyone involved. It is a very timely resolution, and I want to give all my support to it.

The Patriarch of Constantinople is one of the world's leading religious figures. He is a man of great intellect, a man of great compassion, and he represents a religious tradition of incomparable majesty. I think that is the only way to describe it.

The Orthodox tradition that he represents is a religious tradition of spiritual validity which combines aesthetic consonance with ancient wisdom. We will bestow the honor on him in allowing him to use the rotunda of the Capitol. But actually, we are the ones who are being honored by his presence here.

I am also very happy to say that he will visit my hometown, my city in the 22d District of California, Santa Barbara, this October for a conference on the environment. He knows spirituality. He knows environmental concerns. He has a very, very keen sense of the geopolitical dynamics of our world today.

So I urge my colleagues to pass this resolution, and I would like to congratulate the authors of the resolution on a very fine resolution.

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield as much time as he may consume to the gentleman from New York [Mr. GILMAN], the chairman of the Committee on International Relations.

(Mr. GILMAN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. NEY] for yielding me the time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution authorizing use of the rotunda of the Capitol for Members to greet and receive His All Holiness Bartholomew, Patriarch of the Greek Orthodox Church. I commend the gentleman from Florida [Mr. BILIRAKIS] for introducing this measure which I was pleased to cosponsor, along with many of our colleagues.

We rarely have the occasion to receive individuals of such high character and moral standing as His All Holiness; and when we receive them, we should do so in a manner befitting their rank and title.

Accordingly, I believe reserving the rotunda on the morning of October 21, 1997, for this occasion is highly appropriate, and it is hoped that all of our Members will avail themselves of the opportunity to greet and receive the Patriarch, who is one of the world's great spiritual leaders and the 270th Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople. He is also a great environmental leader.

His All Holiness is a man of peace who has worked tirelessly to bridge the differences that have sometimes troubled relations between our two friends and NATO allies, Turkey and Greece. As the head of the Orthodox denomination which has close to 300 million congregants worldwide, including millions in North and South America, His All Holiness is looked to for guidance as the principal spiritual leader by many of our fellow citizens.

Accordingly, I urge our colleagues to approve this resolution permitting the use of the rotunda for this important legislation.

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield as much time as he may consume to the distinguished gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PAPPAS].

Mr. PAPPAS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. NEY] for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of House Concurrent Resolution 134, which was introduced by the distinguished gentleman from Florida [Mr. BILIRAKIS], a national leader in the effort to raise awareness of issues of concern to the Greek American community and the Orthodox religion.

Mr. Speaker, House Concurrent Resolution 134 would allow the use of the Capitol rotunda for a ceremony where Members of Congress could greet and receive His All Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew. Patriarch Bartholomew is leader to over 300 million Orthodox Christians worldwide and many millions here in the United States, a religious leader who resides in Istanbul, once referred to as Constantinople, at the ecumenical patriarchate under some very difficult conditions at times.

□ 1345

Patriarch Bartholomew's visit comes only a few months after the visit of the late Mother Teresa. Having participated in Mother Teresa's visit, I was moved by her presence and felt blessed

to be in attendance. It was an honor to meet someone who has done so much to advance the cause of Christ and to "love even the least of these."

Patriarch Bartholomew is similarly a person who is outspoken in his views. He believes in protection of religious freedoms, combating human rights abuses and protecting the vulnerable, born and unborn. As the 270th successor to the Apostle Andrew, His All Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew has been very active in seeking spiritual renewal within the Orthodox Church as well as opening lines of communication between all Christian denominations and other religions.

As such, I am very proud to join with my colleagues in supporting this resolution to make available the Capitol Rotunda to this religious leader who has opened up so many hearts and souls to the good mission of the Orthodox Church. I look forward to his visit next month and urge all my colleagues to participate in his visit. Many of us are excited about this visit as are many of my constituents.

Again, I would like to commend the gentleman from Florida [Mr. BILIRAKIS] on all his hard work to move this matter forward as well as this Congress for considering this important resolution.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of House Concurrent Resolution 134 which, as you know, would authorize the use of the Capitol rotunda for an address by His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. Earlier in the year, I signed a letter to Speaker GINGRICH with over 40 other members of the Hellenic Caucus requesting that the Patriarch have the opportunity to address Congress during his October visit. I consequently signed on as a cosponsor of House Concurrent Resolution 134 when it was introduced just a few months ago and am naturally very pleased to see this bill on the floor today.

On a related front, I hope to see H.R. 2248, another bill concerning His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, on the floor soon. This bill would authorize the President to present a Congressional Gold Medal to the Patriarchate—an honor from this body that I believe he richly deserves.

Mr. Speaker, His All Holiness Bartholomew is one of the world's most important religious leaders. As the Archbishop of Constantinople and New Rome, he is the 270th successor of the almost 2,000-year-old Christian Center founded by Apostle Andrew. In this capacity he serves as the spiritual leader of some 300 million people worldwide. He is also one of the world's most outspoken champions for religious freedom and human rights.

In a recent interview with Time magazine Patriarchate Bartholomew provided some insight on the direction he wants to steer the Orthodox Church. "The Ecumenical Patriarchate," he said "wishes to remain only a church, one which is free and respected by everybody. We have lived side by side with Muslims and Jews, and we have developed trusting relationships with both. It is our belief that Orthodox Christians have a special responsibility to East-West rapprochement."

These are, of course, the types of sentiments that are surely going to be reiterated by

Patriarch Bartholomew, and well received by Congress, in October. Indeed, I know many of my colleagues are well aware of the struggles the Eastern Ecumenical Patriarchate in Istanbul has had in exercising its faith free of persecution from the Turkish Government. To date, Patriarch Bartholomew has had no success in persuading the Turkish Government to reopen the Orthodox Church's theological school on Halki. The school was closed by the Turkish Government 25 years ago. It's closure, Mr. Speaker, has prevented the church from preparing new generations of religious leaders.

I am proud to have joined with many of my colleagues in the 104th and 105th Congresses in support of legislation calling on the administration to use its influence with the Turkish Government to help secure religious freedom for Orthodox Christians in Turkey. To that end, I very much look forward to Patriarch Bartholomew's visit and to working with him to pursue religious freedom in Turkey and across the world. I think it is extremely appropriate to make our Capitol available for this purpose and urge all my colleagues to support this resolution.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. NEY] that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, House Concurrent Resolution 134, as amended.

The question was taken.

Mr. CONDIT. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 5, rule I, and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

HOUSING PROGRAMS EXTENSION ACT OF 1997

Mr. LAZIO of New York. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill (S. 562) to amend section 255 of the National Housing Act to prevent the funding of unnecessary or excessive costs for obtaining a home equity conversion mortgage, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

S. 562

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Housing Programs Extension Act of 1997".

TITLE I—SENIOR CITIZEN HOME EQUITY PROTECTION

SECTION 101. SHORT TITLE.

This title may be cited as the "Senior Citizen Home Equity Protection Act".

SEC. 102. DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS; PROHIBITION OF FUNDING OF UNNECESSARY OR EXCESSIVE COSTS.

Section 255(d) of the National Housing Act (12 U.S.C. 1715z-20(d)) is amended—