

which is four times the national average. The change is similar to the legislation Senator JOHN BREAUX has pending in the other body.

The current authorization of the arbitration programs expires on September 30 of this year, and thus there is some urgency, Mr. Speaker, in reauthorizing these very successful programs prior to that date.

I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this bipartisan bill.

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

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise as well in support of S. 996, the House version of which was reported out of the House Committee on the Judiciary on June 23 of this year. S. 996 includes an extension of certain arbitration programs in the Federal district courts that have been in place now for 20 years. It is well known that as the court systems have increased both the interests of the public and the number of litigation matters that have appeared before our Federal courts around the Nation, and arbitration has been a very effective and useful tool to bring parties to the opportunity of resolution and fairness and equity and justice, and as proponents of that on the floor of the House I think it is extremely important that we give this vehicle an opportunity to work further.

This bill also creates a reauthorization of caseload reporting requirements from Federal courts, and might I say that as we secure these caseload requirements it was noted that part of the result is to assist judges in making sure they clean up cases that have been on the dockets for 3 years and motions for 6 months. I also hope, however, that the utilization of this data helps us to recognize the great burden that is placed on many of our district courts and will see us encouraging, one, the creation of new courts to help alleviate the burden because where we have burden and case logs, cases jammed, we also have a denial of justice. So this would hopefully help us to remedy the problems that we might have in overload in many of our Federal courts. This legislation also creates an extension of certain temporary judgeships and a transfer of a judgeship from one Louisiana district to another.

I am aware at this time, Mr. Speaker, of no objections to this legislation before us. I certainly would like to commend the hard work of the gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. COBLE] who worked very hard on this legislation. I am sure that many of our courts around the Nation, our Federal district courts, will appreciate some of the assistance that is given to them through this legislation, and I also thank the ranking member, the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. FRANK], for his leadership, along with our staffs for concluding work on this important piece of legislation.

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

Mr. COBLE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas for her generous comments.

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

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. COBLE] that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill, S. 996, 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.

REGARDING CANADIAN BORDER BOAT LANDING PERMIT

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2027) to provide for the revision of the requirements for a Canadian border boat landing permit pursuant to section 235 of the Immigration and Nationality Act, and to require the Attorney General to report to the Congress on the impact of such revision.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 2027

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

SECTION 1. CHANGE IN CANADIAN BORDER BOAT LANDING PERMIT REQUIREMENTS.

(a) REVISED REGULATION.—Not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Attorney General, in consultation with the Commissioner of Immigration and Naturalization, shall issue revised regulations for the implementation of section 235 of the Immigration and Nationality Act with respect to the requirement that certain individuals entering the United States from Canada by boat obtain a landing permit. The revised regulations shall provide that, in the case of a United States citizen traveling in a boat of not more than 65 feet in length (including a boat of not more than 65 feet in length (including a boat used for commercial purposes) on a trip between the United States and Canada of not more than 72 hours duration, the citizen need not obtain such a permit if—

- (1) the citizen carries a United States passport for the duration of the trip; and
- (2) the citizen is not an owner, or an operator, of the boat.

(b) SUNSET.—The revised regulations issued under subsection (a) shall cease to be effective on December 31, 1998. After such date, the regulations that were in effect on the day before the enactment of this Act with respect to the requirement that certain individuals entering the United States from Canada by boat obtain a landing permit shall resume to be effective, in the same manner and to the same extent as if this Act had not been enacted.

(c) REPORT.—Not later than March 1, 1999, the Attorney General shall report to the Congress on the impact of the revised regulations issued under subsection (a) on the number and nature of unauthorized entrances by individuals into the United States.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas [Mr. SMITH] and the gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. WATT] each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas [Mr. SMITH].

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the time and effort the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. LATOURETTE] has devoted in working with me to devise a bill that addresses the legitimate concerns of his Great Lakes constituency while at the same time keeping the U.S. border as secure as possible. H.R. 2027 carefully balances the two competing interests. I urge my colleagues to vote in support of this legislation.

By way of background American and Canadian small boat operators and their passengers returning to the U.S. from Canadian waters must either enter through a port of entry or possess approved I-68 forms issued by the INS and good for 1 year. While the I-68 forms allow individuals on boats to enter the United States without being inspected at each docking, the persons are physically inspected and entered into INS records once a year in applying at INS offices for the forms. H.R. 2027 would set up a pilot program whereby a United States citizen passenger on a small boat would be able to return from Canadian waters without an inspection or an I-68 form as long as the passenger was carrying an United States passport.

I do not want to leave the impression that I do not have concerns about any waiving of the I-68 requirement. The Subcommittee on Immigration and Claims recently held a hearing on alien smuggling in which it was learned that smuggling from Canada has been increasing and will continue to increase as beefed-up border control presence makes the southern border less hospitable. Unfortunately, smugglers will look for any available weak link in our border security apparatus.

However there are two aspects to the bill of the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. LATOURETTE] that minimize these security concerns. First, passengers must still carry U.S. passports. Because a passport is the identification document most difficult to counterfeit, alien smugglers will find it difficult to use.

Second, experimenting with an I-68 waiver as a pilot program lasting until the end of 1998 will enable the INS to measure its effects and report back to Congress on whether making the waiver permanent is warranted.

Again, I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of H.R. 2027.

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

Mr. WATT of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I might consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the bill, and let me state from the outset that if a vote is called on this bill, it will not be because I called for the vote. It seems to me that we are getting votes on each one of the suspension bills today for other reasons. I rise in opposition to this bill not because there are not competing arguments, but because there are competing arguments, and I think my colleagues deserve to hear arguments on all sides of this bill.

This is a bipartisan bill, and a number of my colleagues on the Democratic side will be speaking in favor of it, and so I hope that my colleagues will just pay attention to the debate and make their own decisions about it.

We used to say when I was growing up that consistency is the hobgoblin of small minds, but we also used to say that when you ignore consistency sometimes you can be extremely hypocritical, and, so according, this dilemma here. On the one hand we are substantially beefing up our borders along especially the southern borders and throughout the rest of the United States. On the other hand, this bill relaxes our border around the Great Lakes, and it seems to me that we at least need to be aware that this is inconsistent with everything else we are saying about immigration policy.

The bill, like every other bill related to U.S. immigration policy, is about striking the proper balance between securing U.S. borders against illegal immigration while allowing trade and tourism to continue to flow freely. I am not convinced that H.R. 2027 strikes the proper balance between these competing interests. The fact is that the southwest border of the United States between Mexico and the United States is becoming more and more secure, or at least we are attempting to make it more and more secure, and as a result pressures are being increased on other borders for people to try to immigrate to this country illegally across other borders. There have already been incidents of smugglers bringing illegal aliens into the U.S. through upstate New York, and while there have been no reported incidents of alien smuggling on the Great Lakes, there have been innumerable instances of alcohol and tobacco products being smuggled across the Great Lakes into Canada to avoid the steep Canadian excise taxes. If we continue to relax the border on the Great Lakes we may be setting the stage for an influx of illegal immi-

grants directly into the heartland of the United States, and that is the dilemma we are in with this bill.

I think it is commendable to try to make it as easy as we can make it for citizens to get back, for our citizens to get back and forth, into and out of Canada. Unfortunately it is not possible always to know who our citizens are, and the law, as currently written, provides some protections while not creating so much of an inconvenience that it is unreasonable.

□ 1530

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. LATOURETTE], who has been a tireless advocate of recreational boaters who have to comply with the requirements of the I-68 form. While the subcommittee had concerns with the gentleman's earlier version of this legislation, he was willing to work with me and other members of the subcommittee, and that is much appreciated. Thanks to the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. LATOURETTE], H.R. 2027 strikes an important balance and ensures our borders remain secure and brings relief to the boating public.

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

Mr. LATOURETTE. Madam Speaker, I want to thank the chairman of the subcommittee, the gentleman from Texas [Mr. SMITH], for his cooperation and leadership on this bill. While, as the gentleman noted, we had a difference of opinion initially on this piece of legislation, I appreciate his willingness to work out a compromise and move H.R. 2027 to the floor.

I also want to thank the gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. WATT], the ranking member of the subcommittee, and although I have not been as successful in convincing him of the worthiness of our bill as I was with the gentleman from Texas [Mr. SMITH], I do want to thank him for his cooperation and also appreciate the thoughtfulness of his remarks.

Madam Speaker, before I begin my remarks about the bill itself, I want to extend a personal apology to several supporters of this legislation who asked to be cosponsors of the bill, and, much to my disappointment, were not added. If there is one positive effect to this revelation, it is that I did not ignore any one Member of Congress. I excluded all of the potential cosponsors to the bill so as to not slight anyone.

Accordingly, I want to take a moment to mention the champions of the boating public who serve in the House on both sides of the aisle and thank them for their efforts on this issue. I want the record to reflect their cosponsorship of H.R. 2027.

They are the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. BONIOR], who happens to be the cochairman of the Congressional Boating Caucus; the gentleman from

Michigan [Mr. DINGELL], the dean of the House, a bad one to leave off; my colleagues the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. TRAFICANT], the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. OXLEY] and the gentlewoman from Ohio [Ms. KAPTUR]; the gentleman from New York [Mr. PAXON]; the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. STUPAK]; also the gentleman from Washington [Mr. METCALF], and also on the floor with us here today is the gentleman from New York [Mr. LAFALCE], a tireless champion for the boating public as well.

Madam Speaker, earlier this year I introduced legislation to modify the I-68 program to allow greater flexibility for recreational boaters from the United States that wished to call on a Canadian port and return home without the inconvenience that that current program places on boaters.

The INS is charged with the important responsibility of keeping our borders secure from illegal immigration, a mission which I wholeheartedly support. Current law requires vessels that have visited Canada undergo a face-to-face inspection with INS upon return, but since 1963 boaters have been afforded the opportunity to apply for what is known as an I-68 permit that would allow multiple crossings without inspection.

This permit was issued without charge until 1995. They then began charging a \$16 personal fee and required that all passengers apply to the INS office.

Until this change, many boaters thought they were complying with the law by calling in to customs and were unaware of the INS inspection requirement. This has caused much confusion along the Canadian-United States border because they are not required to pay a fee at Canadian-United States land crossings. These boaters rightfully wonder if once again they are being singled out as a broad target for additional user fees such as the ill-conceived FCC radio license fee.

Madam Speaker, I am a supporter of the fee-for-service concept and I believe that if a particular class of citizens is receiving an individualized service from the government, it should help pay for it. However, there appears to be no discernible increase in INS inspection activities for the recreational borders along the border with the I-68.

Additionally, if INS is willing to forego the face-to-face inspection requirement for a \$16 annual fee, it appears it does not consider recreational boaters as a major conduit for illegal aliens, but rather as a source for additional revenue.

The I-68 permit has caused an adverse economic impact in my district, and I would suggest all of the districts along the Great Lakes border. This has translated in my district to 6,000 less boat trips and an economic loss of about \$2 million for each of the countries involved in the destination spending.

With the counsel of the gentleman from Texas, Chairman SMITH, and the

support of other members of the subcommittee, we have crafted a bill that we think crafts a good compromise. It will give boaters an additional option to the I-68 without compromising the security of the United States-Canadian border.

The bill will allow passengers on the vessel to utilize the U.S. passport, which is the document we use to travel all over the world, without paying an additional fee. Thanks to Chairman SMITH's wisdom, we have also included a provision that there will be a report sent to Congress that will evaluate the effectiveness of our change and will also sunset after a 1-year exploration period.

Also I wanted to commend the INS. They are now engaged in a pilot program where they have video phones installed in the district of the gentleman from New York [Mr. MCHUGH], and it is my hope that if we cannot eliminate either the fee or the I-68, eventually we can expand that pilot program to the ports of entry along the Great Lakes.

Again I want to thank the gentleman from Texas, Chairman SMITH, for his cooperation and also the gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. WATT], the ranking member.

Madam Speaker, with the balance of the time that I have been yielded, I would ask the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. TRAFICANT] if he has observations he wanted to make?

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

Mr. LATOURETTE. I yield to the gentleman from Ohio.

Mr. TRAFICANT. Madam Speaker, I appreciate that very much and your efforts. I was part of an effort to offer an amendment last year that was approached but was finally dropped from the bill that deals with this particular issue. I would like to say that the arguments and positions presented in opposition by the gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. WATT] make a lot of sense, and I hope before it is all over some of those things will be worked out, because his position is very valid. I want to commend him for the effort he has made. We have an awful lot of boaters up there and I believe there has been an undue hassle. Sometimes we can cut through the red tape.

Mr. WATT of North Carolina. Madam Speaker, I yield 6 minutes to the gentleman from New York [Mr. LAFALCE].

Mr. LAFALCE. Madam Speaker, I support the purpose of this bill to make it easier for recreational boaters to cross the waters between the United States and Canada. Very often those waters are as far from the one wall of this Chamber to the other wall of this Chamber. It is important to understand that. But I do think there are two modifications to the bill before us that I hope will be made in conference that could significantly improve the legislation.

One of the main complaints I hear about the current I-68 program is that a United States citizen who is invited

to go on a pleasure ride aboard a friend's boat must first go to an immigration office to complete the I-68 application and pay the required fee even for a one-time recreational excursion that never stops in Canada.

This is crazy. This is crazy. So H.R. 2027 would take a step in the right direction by exempting passengers who are U.S. citizens from the requirement of obtaining an I-68 permit, but only if they carry a U.S. passport.

I have some difficulty with that, because the passport requirement is unprecedented with respect to the United States and Canada, and, in my judgment, extremely impractical. We are talking about friends who come up with their bathing suits and their children and they do not have passports to go out on these recreational boats for a swim, to fish, et cetera.

United States citizens have never been required to carry a passport to re-enter the United States from Canada. Indeed, such a requirement would violate the specific intent of the United States-Canada Accord on our shared border to open and improve the flow of United States and Canadian citizens across the border. As a practical matter, requiring recreational boaters and their guests, many of them children, to carry a passport while boating, is quite unrealistic.

I understand they can have the I-68 instead, but the INS enacted regulations last week that attempt to simplify the process for obtaining these permits for some boaters by allowing applications to be made by mail. Well, this is a welcome change, but it does not alleviate the problem for most guests because the initial application must still be made at an immigration office.

For these reasons, I hope the final version of the bill will strike the passport requirement, and we never required a passport for Canada, while retaining the I-68 exemption for United States citizen passengers. As this bill provides, boat owners would still be required to obtain a permit.

Now, a second, even stronger complaint I hear from my constituents involves the fee that the INS began charging for these permits in 1995. Again, I am saying INS began charging fees in 1995. They did not charge fees before. They never wanted to, they did not, but in 1995, they looked at a law and said we think this law requires us to charge a fee. For 32 years they interpreted the law to say no fee is necessary and will not charge one, because the amount we raise is negligible. But for the past 2 years, because of this new interpretation of an old law, they have been charging \$16 for individuals and \$32 for family permits.

We need to change the law so that they can operate in the future the way they did for 30-some years. How much money have they raised per year by charging these fees? About \$30,000. That is what we are talking about. It is peanuts. But insofar as the number of

permits, well, in 1995, when no fee was required, we had about 10,000 permits; in 1996, with that fee, about 1,000; 1,000 percent more in 1995 than 1996. Who is adversely affected? American businesses along the border, where those recreational boaters are not stopping. That is who is being hurt.

I believe that Congress should provide direction to the INS by authorizing the Attorney General to eliminate the fee, the way they did for 30-some years. These fees act as a deterrent to boaters in obtaining the permit, particularly in light of the fact that Canada does not require such a fee for entry.

I again applaud the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. LATOURETTE] for his excellent leadership on this, and I look forward to working with the gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. WATT] and the gentleman from Texas [Mr. SMITH] as this bill proceeds and goes into conference.

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

Mr. LAFALCE. I yield to the gentleman from Ohio.

Mr. LATOURETTE. Madam Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from New York [Mr. LAFALCE] for his thoughtful comments and suggestions. I can assure the gentleman that I support both of the proposals to improve the current I-68 program. The original legislation, as the gentleman knows, proposed exactly the gentleman's thoughts. However, in working through the legislative process with the subcommittee, it became apparent that such a proposal would not win the approval of the committee and hence no floor action.

I made it clear to our colleagues on the subcommittee that we hope the study included in this bill would give us evidence to come back and hopefully get rid of the fee and/or the I-68. I look forward to working with the gentleman, and I thank him for his thoughts.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Washington [Mr. METCALF].

Mr. METCALF. Madam Speaker, I want to take us on a short excursion through the Second Congressional District of Washington State, one of the most beautiful inland waterways in the world. With over 200 islands, give or take a few, depending on the tide, it is no wonder that the San Juan Islands and Northern Puget Sound have been called the boating capital of the world. In fact, the San Juan Islands are always ranked among the top tourist spots in the Northwest, and on any given day in the summer months, thousands of boaters travel the inland waters between Canada and the United States.

But today, Madam Speaker, the Immigration and Naturalization Service in their infinite wisdom has decided that this kind of boating needs much more regulation. It is not enough that American boaters must report to the

Canadian authorities when they enter Canada and to customs agents when they return from Canada. Now they must procure a special form from the INS called the I-68 form when they travel back and forth from United States to Canada. This form must be in the possession of every member on board the vessel at a cost of about \$20 a head.

I frankly do not think the INS knows exactly what it is getting into. For one thing, where is the money coming from which will fund the hundreds of new INS agents that we are going to need to enforce this outlandish regulation? It will not raise that much money. Finally, I do not think many of my constituents are excited about going through the bureaucratic nightmare, drive perhaps 100 miles to an INS facility, stand in line for possibly hours, pay a \$20 fee for a piece of paper that now gives them the OK by INS to travel into Canada and back.

Let me thank the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. LATOURETTE] and the gentleman from New York [Mr. LAFALCE] for their work on this issue. Let us not further increase bureaucratic redtape at the border for law abiding citizens.

□ 1545

Let us get rid of one more Federal form, the I-68.

Mr. WATT of North Carolina. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. STUPAK].

Mr. STUPAK. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time. I would like to thank the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. LATOURETTE] for his leadership on this issue.

Madam Speaker, I urge the passage of H.R. 2027. While not a perfect bill, it is a move in the right direction. This bill will establish a pilot program that aims to prove that once again, while the Federal Government has good intentions, its regulations can, at times, be overburdensome on American citizens.

For years, recreational boaters were permitted to obtain form I-68 from the Immigration and Naturalization Service, or INS, for free. This form allowed the boaters to reenter the United States without inspections on bodies of water along the Canadian border during the navigation season. In the Great Lakes, Canadian waters can be as close as a stone's throw away. In fact, in my congressional district, which has more shoreline than any congressional district except Alaska, and most of that shoreline is with Canada, we want the freedom to move back and forth without further interference and disruption from the Federal Government.

Two years ago, the INS began charging a fee for this form. What this all boils down to is that American citizens are paying a new fee for the privilege of reentering the United States. They are not receiving services, because that was the whole purpose of the form, to allow citizens to move back and forth

freely without inspection. I find it incredible that we are now charging U.S. citizens for the simple act of reentering their own country.

Furthermore, individuals must apply and pay for this form in person. This may not seem like such a hardship to other States, but in northern Michigan, this could mean at least an 8-hour drive for many of my constituents to the nearest INS office.

This bill is simply an 18-month pilot program that reestablishes a system that has worked well for years. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation and to restore a small sense of integrity to the Federal Government.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I would hope the gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. WATT] would finish up with his speakers and we could proceed.

Mr. WATT of North Carolina. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to just say in conclusion that this bill clearly is an improvement over similar legislation which passed the House on the Suspension Calendar last year, but there is no escaping the fact that the net effect of the bill is to further relax border security on the Great Lakes. While I understand that the current system may be inconvenient to Great Lakes boaters, I do not believe that such inconvenience justifies any further relaxation of the border along the Great Lakes, especially at a time when the Congress and this administration have increased efforts to secure all of America's borders against illegal immigration and drug smuggling.

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

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I support this very narrow and time limited change to the law which will allow guests of boat owners sailing on the Great Lakes to be exempted from the INS I-68 permit. The I-68, called the Canadian border boat landing permit, allows boaters to travel to and from Canada without inspection for the entire summer boating season.

This bill will not exempt boat owners from I-68 permit requirements. It will merely permit a nonfamily member guest from having to apply for the I-68, paying \$16 and waiting 2 weeks for the permit just to take a possible one time recreational ride on a boat on the Great Lakes. Guests will still be required to have a U.S. passport.

This bill is not a carte blanche opening of the Great Lake borders, it is tailored very narrowly. H.R. 2027 will sunset in December 1998 and requires the Attorney General to make a report to Congress on the impact of the revised regulation. Therefore, next year, INS will be able to ascertain whether this limited exemption has had any adverse impact on illegal immigration or narcotics smuggling. In the meantime, this small but important change will enhance tourism on both sides of the border.

The Great Lakes provide great summer recreation to many American citizens and Canadian nationals. In Detroit, we can see Windsor, Canada, and share the Detroit River with

them. Many of my constituents vacation on the Great Lakes in the Upper Peninsula and frequently cross over to the Canadian shore. By modernizing the I-68 permit requirement we can ease the paperwork burdens on their travel as guests. I urge your support on this very narrowly tailored and practical bill.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. EMERSON). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas [Mr. SMITH] that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2027.

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 of rule I and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

JACOB WETTERLING CRIMES AGAINST CHILDREN AND SEXUALLY VIOLENT OFFENDERS REGISTRATION IMPROVEMENTS ACT OF 1997

Mr. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1683) to clarify the standards for State sex offender registration programs under the Jacob Wetterling Crimes Against Children and Sexually Violent Offender Registration Act, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 1683

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 "Jacob Wetterling Crimes Against Children and Sexually Violent Offenders Registration Improvements Act of 1997".

SEC. 2. STANDARDS FOR SEX OFFENDER REGISTRATION PROGRAMS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 170101(a) of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 14071(a)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)—

(A) in subparagraph (A), by striking "with a designated State law enforcement agency"; and

(B) in subparagraph (B), by striking "with a designated State law enforcement agency";

(2) by striking paragraph (2) and inserting the following:

"(2) DETERMINATION OF SEXUALLY VIOLENT PREDATOR STATUS; WAIVER; ALTERNATIVE MEASURES.—

"(A) IN GENERAL.—A determination of whether a person is a sexually violent predator for purposes of this section shall be made by a court after considering the recommendation of a board composed of experts in the behavior and treatment of sex offenders, victims' rights advocates, and representatives of law enforcement agencies.

"(B) WAIVER.—The Attorney General may waive the requirements of subparagraph (A) if the Attorney General determines that the State has established alternative procedures or legal standards for designating a person as a sexually violent predator.