

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume to thank the gentleman from Michigan for his supportive comments.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material 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. HORN. Madam Speaker, I am delighted that my colleagues have unanimously supported this legislation 404 to 0.

Foreign adoption provides many U.S. citizens with the opportunity not only to experience the joys of parenthood but also to provide their children with a better life in the United States.

As the author of H.R. 2886, a bipartisan bill, we have provided for an expansion of these opportunities. The intent of the bill is to allow immigrant orphan siblings to stay together when they are being adopted by U.S. citizens.

Under current law, a U.S. citizen may bring an immigrant child they have adopted to the United States if the child is under the age of 16. This legislation would allow U.S. citizens to adopt immigrant children ages 16–17 if the adoption would keep a group of siblings together.

Family unity is a frequently cited goal of our immigration policy, and this proposal would promote that goal. The typical case this proposal would help is a group of siblings who were orphaned in their home country—or their parents became unable to care for them. If the children are adopted by U.S. citizens and the oldest sibling is 16 or 17, the oldest sibling cannot come to the United States with his or her brothers and sisters under current law. It does not make sense for siblings to be separated because of an arbitrary age limit.

Moreover, some foreign adoption authorities do not allow the separation of siblings. In such a case, if a U.S. citizen wanted to adopt a group of siblings and one of them is 16 or older, the citizen would lose the opportunity to adopt any of them under current law.

This bill is unlikely to cause a significant increase in immigration levels overall. During fiscal year 1996, a total of 351 immigrant orphans older than age 9 were adopted by U.S. citizens, out of 11,316 immigrant orphans adopted by U.S. citizens overall that year. Although the number of families helped by this bill may be relatively small, the chance to keep a group of brothers and sisters together would mean a great deal to these families.

I thank the House leadership for scheduling H.R. 2886 on the suspension calendar today. I also appreciate the support and assistance of Judiciary Committee Chairman HENRY HYDE, Ranking Member JOHN CONYERS, Immigration and Claims Subcommittee Chairman LAMAR SMITH, and Subcommittee Ranking Member SHEILA JACKSON-LEE.

We have all done the right thing—immigrant families and America will gain.

Mr. POMEROY. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2886, legislation introduced by my colleague, Representative HORN

(R—CA). This legislation would promote adoption and improve the lives of hundreds of children by allowing immigrant orphan siblings to stay together when being adopted by U.S. citizens.

Under current law, a U.S. citizen may bring an immigrant child they have adopted to the United States only if the child is under the age of 16. If a group of siblings are orphaned in their home country, for example, and those children are adopted by U.S. citizens, any siblings aged 16 or older cannot come to the United States with their brothers and sisters under current law. Mr. Chairman, orphaned siblings should not be separated because of an arbitrary age limit. Representative HORN's legislation would allow U.S. citizens to adopt immigrant children ages 16–17 if the adoption would keep a group of siblings together. This legislation would go a long way towards ensuring that orphaned siblings join permanent families.

Madam Speaker, this legislation would produce an important change in our nation's immigration policy, but its most significant impact is deeply personal. My own mother was orphaned at a young age, and was separated from her siblings as a result. Through her experience, and later through my own experience as the adoptive father of two beautiful Korean children, I have come to appreciate family unity as precious to parents and children alike. Although the number of families helped by this bill may be relatively small, keeping even one group of siblings together will have an immeasurable impact on those children's lives. As a cosponsor of H.R. 2886 and an adoptive parent, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

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

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. 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. 2886.

The question was taken.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

CLARIFICATION OF APPLICATION OF LIMITATION ON STATE INCOME TAXATION OF PENSION INCOME

Mr. GEKAS. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 462) to clarify that governmental pension plans of the possessions of the United States shall be treated in the same manner as the State pension plans for purposes of the limitation on the State income taxation of pension income.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 462

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

SECTION 1. CLARIFICATION OF APPLICATION OF LIMITATION ON STATE INCOME TAXATION OF PENSION INCOME.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subparagraph (G) of section 114(b)(1) of title 4, United States Code, is amended by inserting before the semicolon “or any plan which would be a governmental plan (as so defined) if possessions of the United States were treated as States for purposes of such section 414(d)”.

(b) CORRECTION OF CLERICAL ERROR.—Section 114 of such title 4 is amended by redesignating subsection (e) as subsection (c).

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to amounts received after the date of the enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GEKAS) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GEKAS).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GEKAS. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 462, the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, I recall that in the 104th Congress, I suppose 2½ years ago, we introduced and had passed both in the House and the Senate, and signed into law, a measure which would guaranty that an individual who earns a pension, for instance in the State of California, and then moves for the remainder of one's life to another State, the bill that we introduced and passed would prevent California from reaching out and taxing the proceeds of that pension of a person no longer living in California.

We learned, to our dismay, that there were hundreds and thousands of people who, after their retirement and moving to another State, found that they were being pursued by a taxing authority of the State in which they earned the pension. Well, we cured that situation and passed, on a bipartisan basis, a measure originally introduced by our colleague, Mrs. Vucanovich, as I recall; and everyone seemed happy about it because we solved a very difficult problem.

But as we did that, it was brought to our attention that our commonwealths, like Puerto Rico and the other territories of the United States, were not accorded the same privileges as we embedded in this particular piece of legislation. What we do here today is simply bring that up to date to cover Puerto Rico and the other territories, so that someone retiring in Puerto Rico, who goes to another State, or vice versa, will not have that odious tentacle of taxation from the working State to the retirement State follow that individual.

In this endeavor to bring this matter to a close and close that little loophole, we were importuned by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MCCOLLUM) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA), as well as the gentleman from Puerto Rico (Mr. ROMERO-BARCELÓ), the resident commissioner of Puerto Rico, and that completed the cycle. The bill that is in front of us now extends that special tax benefit, shall we say, to everyone who has ever worked in the United States or its territories.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

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

Mr. KILDEE. Madam Speaker, this legislation was introduced by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GEKAS), the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MCCOLLUM), the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA), and the gentleman from Puerto Rico (Mr. ROMERO-BARCELÓ) on February 2, 1999. It would make a technical correction to the legislation enacted in the 104th Congress which exempted from income tax certain retirement income paid to a non-resident of the State in which the retirement income was earned.

□ 1500

The proposed legislation merely clarifies that governmental plans, that is public employee retirement plans, includes plans provided by governments of possessions of the United States.

The original bill only applied to States and, thus, excluded retirees from governmental entities of U.S. possessions. It would address the situation now faced by retirees from Puerto Rico who now reside in the United States who are unable to take advantage of the benefits of this law on par with the other retirees.

This bill has strong bipartisan support, it is technical in nature, and would grant equal treatment to retirees similarly situated.

I urge its adoption.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GEKAS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 462.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERMITTING USE OF ROTUNDA OF THE CAPITOL FOR PRESENTATION OF CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL TO PRESIDENT AND MRS. GERALD R. FORD

Mr. THOMAS. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 196) permitting the use of the rotunda of the Capitol for the presentation of the Congressional Gold Medal to President and Mrs. Gerald R. Ford.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 196

*Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring).* That the rotunda of the Capitol is authorized to be used on October 27, 1999, for the presentation of the Congressional Gold Medal to President and Mrs. Gerald R. Ford. Physical preparations for the ceremony shall be carried out in accordance with such conditions as the Architect of the Capitol may prescribe.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS).

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

Madam Speaker, I am moving this resolution for the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS) who represents the area of Grand Rapids, which was the area that Gerald R. Ford represented as a Member of the House of Representatives and as its minority leader.

I think it is entirely appropriate that the Presidential Congressional Gold Medal be awarded to President and Mrs. Ford.

Congressman Ford wound up President Ford in one of the most unique series of events in the history of the United States. Congressman Ford was appointed Vice President of the United States according to the 25th Amendment, and then Vice President Ford became President Ford upon the resignation of President Nixon.

I will soon conclude my time and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) will have an opportunity to talk about this particular representative from Michigan.

I have known President Ford for some time. I knew him briefly before he became President, and I have known him for some time after he became President. He is one of those individuals of which we have many on the floor of the House who are professionals. That is, they go about the business of representing their constituents in a professional fashion.

That is one of the reasons Jerry Ford rose to be minority leader and why when there was a need to fill the vice presidential slot in a time of national trouble that they turned to Jerry Ford and that, in one of the saddest periods I believe that, notwithstanding his being appointed to the two highest offices in the land, he conducted himself

and his presidency in exemplar fashion, and that he should have been rewarded, in the humble opinion of this gentleman from California, the presidency through the electoral process.

That was not to be. But the people of the United States owe President Ford a great debt of gratitude on the way in which he conducted himself as an appointed Vice President and as an appointed President.

It is entirely appropriate that, in the rotunda on October 27, President Ford and Mrs. Ford will receive the Congressional Gold Medal.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

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

Mr. KILDEE. Madam Speaker, President Gerald and Mrs. Betty Ford are two of the finest people I have ever known. They came, as I do, from Michigan, great citizens of Michigan.

I happen to have had the great pleasure of serving with the brother of President Gerald Ford, Tom Ford, in the Michigan Legislature; and, in that fashion, I met Gerald Ford many, many times when he was minority leader here in the House where he conducted himself very, very well, was chosen, in a wise decision, to become the Vice President of the United States, and then succeeded to the presidency of the United States.

He and his wife brought to the White House exactly what America needed at that time. They brought decency and a concern and helped heal this Nation. This Nation and I personally are grateful to President Gerald and Mrs. Betty Ford for what they have done for this country. They certainly deserve this medal and certainly deserve this ceremony in the rotunda.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of House Concurrent Resolution 196, to reserve the Rotunda of the Capitol for a ceremony to present a Congressional Gold Medal to our distinguished former President, Gerald R. Ford, and our former First Lady, Betty Ford, for their "dedicated public service and outstanding humanitarian contributions to the people of the United States."

I was among the more than 300 cosponsors of legislation, enacted on October 21, 1998, to authorize this honor.

Since the American Revolution, Congress has commissioned Gold Medals as its highest expression of national appreciation for distinguished achievements and contributions. Each medal is individually struck to honor a particular individual or individuals, institution, or notable event.

President Ford is the first former President to be so honored during his lifetime, and this is also the first time that a President and First Lady have been honored jointly.

Congress has awarded Gold Medals to several distinguished men during their military careers who would later go on to become Presidents of the United States:

George Washington, by the Continental Congress before the Revolutionary War began