

with it. But every now and then it pays off to have a congressman in your family.

Today is one of those days. On December 7, 1998, Mike Gerro and Jan Barton Gerro had a beautiful baby daughter, Whitney Elizabeth Gerro. They have written this poem to announce her arrival to the world, and I want to read it for my colleagues here in the House. It is entitled, "A Special Arrival."

She's an angel of sweetness
A treasure of love
A beautiful blessing
From heaven above.
A daughter adored.
Who with nurture will grow.
What a pleasure to welcome
Whitney Elizabeth Gerro.

She really is a blessing. She had her baptism this past Sunday in Arlington, Texas. I am very, very proud to be one of her uncles.

THE REPUBLICAN PARTY WORKS DILIGENTLY TO PROTECT SOCIAL SECURITY

(Mr. KINGSTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, the Republican Party is working very diligently and very intensely with the Senate to try to protect social security. We have a lot of concerns about the President's proposal, which only protects or earmarks 62 percent of the social security trust fund dollars for social security.

Many of us believe that we should put 100 percent of social security dollars into social security and not spend it on any other program; not for roads, not for bridges, not for congressional salaries, not for anything else. We hope that we can get the President to come around to our way of thinking.

We also feel that we need to pay down the debt. We have a debt of \$5.4 trillion. Which costs the American families, on an average for a family of four, about \$2,000 dollars a year. That is \$2,000 for a college tuition, for house payments, for a nice vacation, for a car, whatever the need of the family is. Now it just goes to interest on the debt. It does not even pay down the principal.

These are things we think the President's budget ignores. We want to put it on the table. We are working in that direction. I hope that the President will decide to join us.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 603, CLARIFYING THE APPLICATION OF THE "DEATH ON THE HIGH SEAS ACT" TO AVIATION INCIDENTS

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 85 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 85

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 603) to amend title 49, United States code, to clarify the application of the Act popularly known as the "Death on the High Seas Act" to aviation incidents. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. Each section of the bill shall be considered as read. During consideration of the bill for amendment, the chairman of the Committee of the Whole may accord priority in recognition on the basis of whether the Member offering an amendment has caused it to be printed in the portion of the Congressional Record designated for that purpose in clause 8 of rule XVIII. Amendments so printed shall be considered as read. The chairman of the Committee of the Whole may: (1) postpone until a time during further consideration in the Committee of the Whole a request for a recorded vote on any amendment; and (2) reduce to five minutes the minimum time for electronic voting on any postponed question that follows another electronic vote without intervening business, provided that the minimum time for electronic voting on the first in any series of questions shall be 15 minutes. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FOLEY). The gentleman from Washington (Mr. HASTINGS) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, for purposes of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Ohio (Mr. HALL), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for purposes of debate only.

(Mr. HASTINGS of Washington asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 85 is an open rule providing 1 hour of general debate. It would be equally divided and controlled between the chairman and the ranking member of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

The rule provides that each section of the bill shall be considered as read. Furthermore, the rule authorizes the Chair to accord priority in recognition to members who have preprinted their amendments in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

The rule also permits the chairman of the Committee of the Whole to postpone votes during consideration of the

bill, and to reduce voting time to 5 minutes on a postponed question if the vote follows a 15-minute vote. Finally, the rule provides for 1 motion to recommit, with or without instructions.

Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 603, reported by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, would clarify that the Death on the High Seas Act shall not be the controlling law in lawsuits arising from aviation crashes into the high seas.

The purpose of this legislation is to ensure that families of passengers killed in airline disasters are not treated differently under law depending on whether the aircraft crashed over land or water.

This discrepancy arises from a Supreme Court ruling in *Zicherman versus Korean Airlines* that applied the Death on the High Seas Act to lawsuits related to crashes over the ocean. Under the Death on the High Seas Act, Mr. Speaker, families are denied the ability to seek compensation in a court of law for such noneconomic factors as a loss of companionship of a loved one, relatives' pain and suffering, or for punitive damages. Under existing law, for example, parents receive virtually no compensation in the death of a child. On the other hand, if a plane crashes over land, State tort laws usually apply, offering a broader range of legal remedies to surviving family members.

Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SHERWOOD) and his colleagues on the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure have made this legislation an early priority this session, and have requested an open rule, which was granted by the Committee on Rules without dissent.

Accordingly, I encourage my colleagues to support House Resolution 85, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, this is an open rule. It will allow for full and fair debates on H.R. 603. As my colleague has described, it will allow for 1 hour of general debate, to be equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. The rule permits amendments under the 5-minute rule, which is the normal amending process in the House. All Members on both sides of the aisle will have the opportunity to offer germane amendments.

H.R. 603 would allow the families of ocean plane crash victims the same rights to file lawsuits as when the crash takes place on land. It was introduced in response to TWA Flight 800, which crashed off the coast of New York in 1996. In 1997, the House passed a similar bill by a voice vote under suspension of the rules, but the Senate failed to take action on the bill.

This is an open rule. It was adopted by a voice vote of the Committee on Rules. I urge adoption of the rule and of the bill.

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

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 661, COMMERCIAL OPERATION OF SUPERSONIC TRANSPORT CATEGORY AIRCRAFT

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 86 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 86

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 661) to direct the Secretary of Transportation to prohibit the commercial operation of supersonic transport category aircraft that do not comply with stage 3 noise levels if the European Union adopts certain aircraft noise regulations. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. Points of order against consideration of the bill for failure to comply with clause 4(a) of rule XIII are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. The bill shall be considered as read. During consideration of the bill for amendment, the chairman of the Committee of the Whole may accord priority in recognition on the basis of whether the Member offering an amendment has caused it to be printed in the portion of the Congressional Record designated for that purpose in clause 8 of rule XVIII. Amendments so printed shall be considered as read. The chairman of the Committee of the Whole may: (1) postpone until a time during further consideration in the Committee of the Whole a request for a recorded vote on any amendment; and (2) reduce to five minutes the minimum time for electronic voting on any postponed question that follows another electronic vote without intervening business, provided that the minimum time for electronic voting on the first in any series of questions shall be 15 minutes. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

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Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, for purposes of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the distinguished gentlewoman from New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER), pending which I yield myself such time as I may con-

sume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

(Mr. HASTINGS of Washington asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, H. Res. 86 is an open rule waiving clause 4(a) of rule XIII, that requires a 3-day layover of the committee report, against consideration of the bill. I would advise my colleagues that the committee's report was, however, filed yesterday on March 2.

The rule provides 1 hour of general debate to be equally divided and controlled between the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. The rule provides that the bill shall be open for amendment at any point.

Furthermore, the rule authorizes the Chair to accord priority in recognition to Members who have preprinted their amendments in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. The rule also allows the Chairman of the Committee of the Whole to postpone votes during consideration of the bill and to reduce votes to 5 minutes on a postponed question if the vote follows a 15-minute vote.

Finally, the rule provides one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 661 will prohibit the operation of supersonic aircraft, such as the Concorde, in the United States if the European Union adopts a rule prohibiting the operation of U.S. aircraft that have been modified to reduce noise emissions or fitted with new engines.

The Europeans claim the EU rule is an environmental issue, but in fact it is a trade issue, because the rule would effectively prevent U.S. airlines from selling their aircraft to European airlines if those aircraft have been modified.

Ironically, however, the proposed EU regulation would not prevent European airlines from selling their own modified aircraft to other European airlines. This legislation, then, is intended to send a signal that the U.S. will not sit for such blatant discrimination and that U.S.-modified aircraft should be treated no differently than similarly modified European airplanes.

Mr. Speaker, CBO estimates that H.R. 661 would have no immediate impact on the Federal budget and that the bill contains no intergovernmental mandates as defined by the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act. The bill would, however, provide a new private-sector mandate on British Airways and Air France, the operators of the Concorde, although such mandates are not expected to exceed the \$100 million threshold.

Mr. Speaker, none of us relishes retaliatory measures of this type. Indeed, we wish they were, in fact, unnecessary. But fair is fair and, accordingly, I urge my colleagues to support H. Res. 86 and the underlying bill, H.R. 661.

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

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I thank the gentleman from Washington (Mr. HASTINGS) for yielding me the customary 30 minutes.

(Ms. SLAUGHTER asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this open rule providing for the consideration of H.R. 661, Conditionally Prohibiting the Operation of Supersonic Aircraft.

This bipartisan bill is brought to the House by the Democratic leader on the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR), and the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SHUSTER), our Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure chairman. They are joined by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI) and the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN).

Since this has been described as the "year of aviation" in Congress, this may then be the first in a series of appearances by these thoughtful and capable leaders on aviation issues. I thank them for their efforts on this legislation and look forward to their good work as the session proceeds.

The rule will allow our highly skilled aviation leaders on both sides of the aisle to make the case for the bill, which I will address just briefly in discussing the rule.

In short, the bill would respond to action being considered by the European Union which would severely restrict the use of some 1,600 U.S.-registered aircraft used by cargo, package services and passenger airlines.

The straw man in this case is airline noise, as the EU proposes to take action against these U.S.-registered aircraft which have been engineered to meet or exceed all applicable noise standards. And I repeat, the United States aircraft are in compliance.

If taken, this action will make it more difficult to sell the United States-owned aircraft because they would be barred from operating internationally.

H.R. 661 says that if the EU persists in taking such action, our Secretary of Transportation must respond by prohibiting the arrival of the supersonic transport, the Concorde, an aircraft which by comparison to our ever-more-quiet United States aircraft is a regular roof-rattler.

H.R. 661 sends a simple message to our friends "across the pond" in the European Union that we will respond in kind should they choose to take action that prohibits the use of U.S. aircraft which are completely in compliance with international standards.

That being said, I commend my friends from the committee of jurisdiction, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and urge support of the rule and the bill.

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