

and education for its member organizations.

I am pleased to have this opportunity to recognize APTA's efforts today.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support House Concurrent Resolution 171, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, as we congratulate APTA on its 25 years of service, I would note that while the large transit systems such as Washington Metro and BART often attract the most attention, the backbone of public transportation in this country is still the providers in small communities and rural areas.

On a daily basis in small communities across our country, many Americans rely on their local bus systems, such as what we have in Huntington, West Virginia, for their transportation needs. Indeed, the Tri-State Transit Authority is a shining example of what makes transit so important in this country, and is one of the reasons why we are commending APTA today.

I would also be remiss if I did not note that another reason why we should be honoring public transportation today is the strong presence of the Amalgamated Transit Union. This organization represents the vast majority of transit workers who daily operate the trains and buses which get people to and from work in a safe manner and their leisure pursuits, as well, and their contribution to public transportation is also being commended today.

I urge the adoption of the pending resolution, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR), the ranking member of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me.

I want to congratulate the subcommittee on moving this legislation, and express my appreciation to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SHUSTER), for moving the bill, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Chairman PETRI), and the ranking member, the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL), for their support in recognizing the American Public Transit Association on its silver anniversary year.

Mr. Speaker, it may seem unusual to be recognizing an organization of this nature on the House floor. Yet, there is nothing more important for the growth, strength, and quality of life in urban America than public transit.

I can remember very vividly as a junior staff member at the time in July, 1964, when President Johnson, on July 9, to be exact, signed into law the Urban Mass Transportation Act of that year. It was seen as an historic piece of legislation. It was the first time that the Federal Government had actually recognized the role of public transportation, transit, as it was called, or be-

ginning to be called at that time, and this small step forward was seen as an important landmark for urban America.

Not that transit had just been discovered by the Federal Government in 1964. In fact, the first transit system was actually a ferry, the Boston ferry, in the 1600s. I think the exact time was 1630 when it began its operations. The longest continually operating transit system in America is the St. Charles Line in New Orleans.

In fact, the St. Charles Line began in 1835, and runs in front of my wife's family home in New Orleans, which is also the site of the annual Mardi Gras festival. The St. Charles Line continues to operate today with upgrades and with improvements and with each of the cars filled with travelers, without which people would not be able to get to work, people would not be able to hold jobs, people would not be able to have affordable transportation in this city that is so clogged with traffic because of the nature of the city streets and the nature of the layout of the community.

Over the years our committee, then the Committee on Public Works and Transportation, now the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, has continued to support and widen the role and widen the public support for transit.

Last year Americans made 8.7 billion trips on transit. About a fourth of those took place in New York City. The New York City transit system carries 2.2 billion passengers a year. Without transit in New York and Northern New Jersey, the area would need 10,400 miles of four-lane highway, which of course is impossible in New York City, it could not be done. And even then, if we could build all that highway, we would still be able to carry only one-third of the passengers that are carried by transit in New York City.

So let us recognize here not just the 25th anniversary of APTA, formed 10 years after President Johnson signed UMTA, the Urban Mass Transportation Act, into law, but let us recognize in so doing the extraordinarily critical role that urban transit systems play in the lifeblood of America's great metropolitan areas: affordable, high-quality alternative transportation choices for commuters, for people visiting cities, reducing congestion and improving travel time for motorists, reducing air pollution, enhancing the quality of life in neighborhoods.

Here in our Nation's Capitol, the Metro system has meant vast improvement in air quality and in access for welfare-to-work, for people who live in poor neighborhoods to get to the jobs that are necessary for their livelihood.

We could do better. We could do as the metro system does in Paris, which moves far greater numbers of people, and of course, that is a 9 million population metropolitan area. But the Paris metro system, for less than half the cost of monthly transit in Washington,

D.C., moves three or four times as many people on a daily basis.

We can do better, and in TEA-21 our committee, with the support of the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SHUSTER), made the investments necessary to carry America into the 21st century, to balance transportation. There is an 80-20 split. Eighty percent of the bill goes to highways, 20 percent to transit, and we continue the growth of investment in transit systems as well as in commuter rail, in light rail systems.

In celebrating the 25th anniversary of the American Public Transit Association, we are also celebrating the progress that we have made in improving transit systems, making them more affordable, making them higher quality, making them available to more people, and in the welfare-to-work provisions of TEA-21, we passed another historic milestone.

It is not enough to say we have ended welfare. It is more important to say we have also provided access to jobs for people. My daughter, Annie, works at Jubilee Jobs in the Adams Morgan area of Washington, where she places people who have fallen through the welfare net, who are living in homeless shelters, who come into Jubilee Jobs in their location in Adams Morgan needing work. The biggest problem is not finding the job, but marrying the person and the job with a means to get to work. The job is meaningless if you do not have money in your pocket, if you do not have a way to get to work. We provided that linkage in the welfare-to-work provisions of TEA-21.

We have made a great start on the 21st century. APTA has helped us get there. This legislation, TEA-21, has moved us forward, and with this resolution today we recognize not only the 25th anniversary of APTA, but we recognize the enormous contributions that public transit is making in the quality of life of all Americans, particularly those neediest among us who have to rely on public transportation systems to get to their work.

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

Mr. PETRI. 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 Wisconsin (Mr. PETRI) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, House Concurrent Resolution 171.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. PETRI. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on House Concurrent Resolution 171.

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

There was no objection.

□ 1445

EXTENDING CHAPTER 12 OF THE BANKRUPTCY CODE FOR 9 MONTHS

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill (S. 1606) to extend for 9 additional months the period for which chapter 2 of title 11, United States Code, is reenacted.

The Clerk read as follows:

S. 1606

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

SECTION 1. AMENDMENTS.

Section 149 of title I of division C of Public Law 105-277, as amended by Public Law 106-5, is amended—

(1) by striking “October 1, 1999” each place it appears and inserting “July 1, 2000”; and

(2) in subsection (a)—

(A) by striking “March 31, 1999” and inserting “September 30, 1999”; and

(B) by striking “April 1, 1999” and inserting “October 1, 1999”.

SEC. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE.

The amendments made by section 1 shall take effect on October 1, 1999.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MILLER of Florida). Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GEKAS) and the gentlewoman from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) each will control 20 minutes.

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

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the Senate bill, S. 1606.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, the record is complete on the necessity for the passage of this bill because only last week we gave the rationale for the need for quick action on this piece of legislation.

On October 1, the authority for family farmers to file for bankruptcy under Chapter 12, a separate and unique set of provisions to accommodate the special and unique needs of farmers in distress, ran out of authority.

It had been extended over a period of time in temporary chunks of time because, in reality, the bankruptcy reform movement has encompassed Chapter 12, the special provisions, and included in them a comprehensive bankruptcy reform in which this special set of provisions, as I have stated, will become permanent. We would not have to ever return to the well of the

House to seek an extension of these benefits.

Now, we are in a position where the Senate acted in a little different way from the way we had on the number of months of extension. The current form, the one that is before us now, the Senate version extends that period from October 1 for 9 months. That is why we are here.

The bill that we passed was less than 9 months. The Senate made it 9 months. We will concur in the Senate amendment and, thus, ask for passage of this legislation.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, it feels like *deja vu* all over again. Just 1 week ago, I was on the floor reluctantly supporting a 3-month extension of the Chapter 12 bankruptcy title for family farmers. I did not particularly like last week's bill because it would have allowed Chapter 12 to expire so soon, on January 1, the year 2000.

I knew that Congress would have to come back again this session before we adjourned for the year to ensure that the bankruptcy protection in the form of Chapter 12 was continued. But I supported it because, otherwise, Chapter 12 would have expired on October 1, last Friday.

Well, guess what? Chapter 12 did expire last Friday. That means that, if a family farmer in my State of Wisconsin or, for that matter, anywhere in the United States needs the protection of Chapter 12 today, they do not have it. The law has expired.

The other body realized that a 3-month extension that this House approved was not prudent and passed a 9-month extension that we have before us today.

So once again, I come to the floor wishing we were doing a little more to provide a safety net for our family farmers. While this bill provides a 9-month extension of Chapter 12 bankruptcy protection for family farmers, it still does not give our family farmers a permanent law on which they can rely to protect their farm in the most dire economic circumstances.

I ask the Republican leadership to stop holding family farmers hostage to negotiations with the other body on other matters. The family farmers I represent need the help of this Congress more than the bankers and the credit card corporations on whose behalf we delay making Chapter 12 a permanent part of our Federal code.

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

Mr. GEKAS. 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 Pennsylvania (Mr. GEKAS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill, S. 1606.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof)

the rules were suspended and the Senate bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

U.S. HOLOCAUST ASSETS COMMISSION EXTENSION ACT OF 1999

Mr. LAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H. R. 2401) to amend the U.S. Holocaust Assets Commission Act of 1998 to extend the period by which the final report is due and to authorize additional funding.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 2401

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 “U.S. Holocaust Assets Commission Extension Act of 1999”.

SEC. 2. AMENDMENTS TO THE U.S. HOLOCAUST ASSETS COMMISSION ACT OF 1998.

(a) EXTENSION OF TIME FOR FINAL REPORT.—Section 3(d)(1) of the U.S. Holocaust Assets Commission Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 1621 nt.) is amended by striking “December 31, 1999” and inserting “December 31, 2000”.

(b) REAUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Section 9 of the U.S. Holocaust Assets Commission Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 1621 nt.) is amended—

(1) by striking “\$3,500,000” and inserting “\$6,000,000”; and

(2) by striking “1999, and 2000,” and inserting “1999, 2000, and 2001.”

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. LAZIO) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. LAFALCE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. LAZIO).

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer the U.S. Holocaust Assets Commission Extension Act of 1999. This bill amends the U.S. Holocaust Assets Commission Act of 1998 to extend the life of the commission for 1 year and authorize it to receive additional funding. As a member of the commission, I can say with confidence that this is a bill that ought to be passed unanimously.

Mr. Speaker, the horrors of the Holocaust are well known, 6 million Jews murdered, along with millions of others deemed undesirable by Adolph Hitler and his followers. What many do not know, however, is that the Holocaust was also the single largest organized theft in history. The Nazis stole, plundered, and looted billions of dollars of assets. A half century later, we are still looking for full accounting.

Though we can never right all the monstrous wrongs that took place during the Holocaust, we have an obligation to find out what happened. We have an obligation to do what we can to bring a measure of justice to the victims of the Holocaust and their families.

In some cases, justice can, indeed, be done. This past summer, for example,