

International Religious Freedom Act of 1998, which established the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom to monitor facts and circumstances of violations of religious freedom and authorized \$3,000,000 to carry out the functions of the Commission for each of fiscal years 1999 and 2000.

(b) SENSE OF THE CONGRESS.—It is the sense of the Congress that—

(1) this resolution assumes that \$3,000,000 will be appropriated within function 150 for fiscal year 2000 for the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom to carry out its duties; and

(2) the House Committee on Appropriations is strongly urged to appropriate such amount for the Commission.

SEC. 11. SENSE OF THE HOUSE ON PROVIDING ADDITIONAL DOLLARS TO THE CLASSROOM.

(a) FINDINGS.—The House finds that—

(1) strengthening America's public schools while respecting State and local control is critically important to the future of our children and our Nation;

(2) education is a local responsibility, a State priority, and a national concern;

(3) working with the Nation's governors, parents, teachers, and principals must take place in order to strengthen public schools and foster educational excellence;

(4) the consolidation of various Federal education programs will benefit our Nation's children, parents, and teachers by sending more dollars directly to the classroom; and

(5) our Nation's children deserve an educational system that will provide opportunities to excel.

(b) SENSE OF THE HOUSE.—It is the sense of the House that—

(1) the House should enact legislation that would consolidate thirty-one Federal K-12 education programs; and

(2) the Department of Education, the States, and local educational agencies should work together to ensure that not less than 95 percent of all funds appropriated for the purpose of carrying out elementary and secondary education programs administered by the Department of Education is spent for our children in their classrooms.

SEC. 12. SENSE OF THE CONGRESS ON ASSET-BUILDING FOR THE WORKING POOR.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

(1) 33 percent of all American households have no or negative financial assets and 60 percent of African-American households have no or negative financial assets;

(2) 46.9 percent of all children in America live in households with no financial assets, including 40 percent of caucasian children and 75 percent of African-American children;

(3) in order to provide low-income families with more tools for empowerment, incentives which encourage asset-building should be established;

(4) across the Nation numerous small public, private, and public-private asset-building initiatives (including individual development account programs) are demonstrating success at empowering low-income workers;

(5) the Government currently provides middle and upper income Americans with hundreds of billions of dollars in tax incentives for building assets; and

(6) the Government should utilize tax laws or other measures to provide low-income Americans with incentives to work and build assets in order to escape poverty permanently.

(b) SENSE OF THE CONGRESS.—It is the sense of the Congress that any changes in tax law should include provisions which encourage low-income workers and their families to save for buying their first home, starting a business, obtaining an education, or taking other measures to prepare for the future.

SEC. 13. SENSE OF THE CONGRESS ON ACCESS TO HEALTH INSURANCE AND PRESERVING HOME HEALTH SERVICES FOR ALL MEDICARE BENEFICIARIES.

(a) ACCESS TO HEALTH INSURANCE.—

(1) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

(A) 43.4 million Americans are currently without health insurance, and that this number is expected to rise to nearly 60 million people in the next 10 years;

(B) the cost of health insurance continues to rise, a key factor in increasing the number of uninsured; and

(C) there is a consensus that working Americans and their families and children will suffer from reduced access to health insurance.

(2) SENSE OF THE CONGRESS ON IMPROVING ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE INSURANCE.—It is the sense of the Congress that access to affordable health care coverage for all Americans is a priority of the 106th Congress.

(b) PRESERVING HOME HEALTH SERVICE FOR ALL MEDICARE BENEFICIARIES.—

(1) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

(A) the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 reformed Medicare home health care spending by instructing the Health Care Financing Administration to implement a prospective payment system and instituted an interim payment system to achieve savings;

(B) the Omnibus Consolidated and Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act, 1999, reformed the interim payment system to increase reimbursements to low-cost providers, added \$900 million in funding, and delayed the automatic 15 percent payment reduction for one year, to October 1, 2000; and

(C) patients whose care is more extensive and expensive than the typical Medicare patient do not receive supplemental payments in the interim payment system but will receive special protection in the home health care prospective payment system.

(2) SENSE OF THE CONGRESS ON ACCESS TO HOME HEALTH CARE.—It is the sense of the Congress that—

(A) Congress recognizes the importance of home health care for seniors and disabled citizens;

(B) Congress and the Administration should work together to maintain quality care for patients whose care is more extensive and expensive than the typical Medicare patient, including the sickest and frailest Medicare beneficiaries, while home health care agencies operate in the interim payment system; and

(C) Congress and the Administration should work together to avoid the implementation of the 15 percent reduction in the interim payment system and ensure timely implementation of the prospective payment system.

SEC. 14. SENSE OF THE HOUSE ON MEDICARE PAYMENT.

(a) FINDINGS.—The House finds that—

(1) a goal of the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 was to expand options for Medicare beneficiaries under the new Medicare+Choice program;

(2) Medicare+Choice was intended to make these choices available to all Medicare beneficiaries; and unfortunately, during the first two years of the Medicare+Choice program the blended payment was not implemented, stifling health care options and continuing regional disparity among many counties across the United States; and

(3) the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 also established the National Bipartisan Commission on the Future of Medicare to develop legislative recommendations to address the long-term funding challenges facing Medicare.

(b) SENSE OF THE HOUSE.—It is the sense of the House that this resolution assumes that funding of the Medicare+Choice program is a

priority for the House Committee on the Budget before financing new programs and benefits that may potentially add to the imbalance of payments and benefits in Fee-for-Service Medicare and Medicare+Choice.

SEC. 15. SENSE OF THE HOUSE ON ASSESSMENT OF WELFARE-TO-WORK PROGRAMS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—It is the sense of the House that, recognizing the need to maximize the benefit of the Welfare-to-Work Program, the Secretary of Labor should prepare a report on Welfare-to-Work Programs pursuant to section 403(a)(5) of the Social Security Act. This report should include information on the following—

(1) the extent to which the funds available under such section have been used (including the number of States that have not used any of such funds), the types of programs that have received such funds, the number of and characteristics of the recipients of assistance under such programs, the goals of such programs, the duration of such programs, the costs of such programs, any evidence of the effects of such programs on such recipients, and accounting of the total amount expended by the States from such funds, and the rate at which the Secretary expects such funds to be expended for each of the fiscal years 2000, 2001, and 2002;

(2) with regard to the unused funds allocated for Welfare-to-Work for each of fiscal years 1998 and 1999, identify areas of the Nation that have unmet needs for Welfare-to-Work initiatives; and

(3) identify possible Congressional action that may be taken to reprogram Welfare-to-Work funds from States that have not utilized previously allocated funds to places of unmet need, including those States that have rejected or otherwise not utilized prior funding.

(b) REPORT.—It is the sense of the House that, not later than January 1, 2000, the Secretary of Labor should submit to the Committee on the Budget and the Committee on Ways and Means of the House and the Committee on Finance of the Senate, in writing, the report described in subsection (a).

SEC. 16. SENSE OF THE CONGRESS ON PROVIDING HONOR GUARD SERVICES FOR VETERANS' FUNERALS.

It is the sense of the Congress that all relevant congressional committees should make every effort to provide sufficient resources so that an Honor Guard, if requested, is available for veterans' funerals.

SEC. 17. SENSE OF THE CONGRESS ON CHILD NUTRITION.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

(1) both Republicans and Democrats understand that an adequate diet and proper nutrition are essential to a child's general well-being;

(2) the lack of an adequate diet and proper nutrition may adversely affect a child's ability to perform up to his or her ability in school;

(3) the Government currently plays a role in funding school nutrition programs; and

(4) there is a bipartisan commitment to helping children learn.

(b) SENSE OF THE CONGRESS.—It is the sense of the Congress that the Committee on Education and the Workforce and the Committee on Agriculture should examine our Nation's nutrition programs to determine if they can be improved, particularly with respect to services to low-income children.

APPOINTMENTS BY THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair announces the following appointments on behalf of the majority leader:

Pursuant to provisions of section 3(b) of Public Law 105-341, the following individuals are appointed to the Women's Progress Commemoration Commission: Elaine L. Chao of Kentucky; Amy M. Holmes of Washington, DC; and Patricia C. Lamar of Mississippi.

APPOINTMENTS BY THE DEMOCRATIC LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair announces the appointment of the following Senators on behalf of the Democratic Leader:

Pursuant to the provisions of Public Law 105-244, the following Senator is appointed to serve as a member of the Web-Based Education Commission: the Honorable JEFF BINGAMAN of New Mexico.

Pursuant to the provisions of Public Law 94-304, as amended by Public Law 99-7, the Chair announces the appointment as members of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe: Senator FRANK R. LAUTENBERG of New Jersey; Senator BOB GRAHAM of Florida; Senator RUSSELL D. FEINGOLD of Wisconsin; and Senator CHRISTOPHER J. DODD of Connecticut.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREE- MENT—HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTIONS 44, 47, AND 50

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed, en bloc, to the consideration of the following concurrent resolutions: H. Con. Res. 44, H. Con. Res. 47, and H. Con. Res. 50.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NATIONAL PEACE OFFICERS' MEMORIAL SERVICE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 44) authorizing the use of the Capitol Grounds for the 18th annual National Peace Officers' Memorial Service.

GREATER WASHINGTON SOAP BOX DERBY

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the next resolution.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 47) authorizing the use of the Capitol Grounds for the Greater Washington Soap Box Derby.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS LAW ENFORCEMENT TORCH RUN

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the next resolution.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 50) authorizing the 1999 District of Columbia Special Olympics Law Enforcement Torch Run to be run through the Capitol Grounds.

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolutions be agreed to, the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating to the resolutions be printed at the appropriate place in the RECORD, with the above occurring en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The concurrent resolutions (H. Con. Res. 44, H. Con. Res. 47, and H. Con. Res. 50) were agreed to.

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, APRIL 15, 1999

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Sen-

ate completes its business today it stand in adjournment until 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, April 15. I further ask that on Thursday, immediately following the prayer, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the morning hour be deemed to have expired, the time for the two leaders be reserved, and the Senate then resume debate on the budget resolution conference report.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PROGRAM

Mr. NICKLES. For the information of all Senators, the Senate will reconvene on Thursday at 9:30 a.m. and immediately begin the final 5 hours of debate on the budget resolution conference report. Therefore, Senators can expect a rollcall vote on adoption of the conference report at approximately 2 p.m., or earlier if time is yielded back. Under a previous order, the Senate may also expect a final vote on the House version of S. 767, the uniform services tax filing fairness bill. That vote is expected to occur immediately following the vote on the budget conference report.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I now ask unanimous consent the Senate stand in adjournment until 9:30 a.m. tomorrow.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 6:09 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, April 15, 1999, at 9:30 a.m.