

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 701

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to remove my name as a cosponsor of H.R. 701.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

DISPENSING WITH CALENDAR WEDNESDAY BUSINESS ON WEDNESDAY NEXT

Mr. LAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the business in order under the Calendar Wednesday rule be dispensed with on Wednesday next.

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

There was no objection.

ADJOURNMENT TO MONDAY, APRIL 3, 2000

Mr. LAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 12:30 p.m. on Monday next for morning hour debates.

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

There was no objection.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 701

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to have my name withdrawn as a cosponsor of H.R. 701.

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

There was no objection.

REAPPOINTMENT TO BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE AMERICAN FOLKLIFE CENTER IN THE LI- BRARY OF CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, pursuant to section 4(b) of Public Law 94-201 (20 U.S.C. 2103(b)), and upon the recommendation of the minority leader, the Chair announces the Speaker's reappointment of the following individual from private life to the Board of Trustees of the American Folklife Center in the Library of Congress on the part of the House:

Mr. William L. Kinney of South Carolina.

There was no objection.

BREAST AND CERVICAL CANCER TREATMENT ACT

(Mrs. MYRICK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. MYRICK. Mr. Speaker, I urge the leadership to schedule a vote on

the Breast and Cervical Cancer Treatment Act on the suspension calendar before Mother's Day. This legislation is really vital to provide treatment for low-income, uninsured working women who are diagnosed with breast or cervical cancer. Giving States the option of providing Medicaid coverage for these women if they are screened by the CDC's early detection program and found to have cancer will help save thousands of lives.

The program currently provides screening for the cancer, but it provides no treatment options, no funding for treatment options for these women. So they have no option to be cured of their cancer, which is a harsh reality. I am currently undergoing treatment for breast cancer, but I am very fortunate because I have insurance.

The funding for this bill was included in the budget resolution that we passed in the House last week and so there really is no reason not to have it passed on the floor by Mother's Day.

INTERNATIONAL ABDUCTION: BRING OUR CHILDREN HOME

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

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to tell the story of Jeff and Ludwig Koons, a father and his son who have been forced apart because of a country's refusal to abide by the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction.

Jeff Koons' son, Ludwig M. Koons, was born in New York and was abducted from the family residence to Rome by his mother. Mr. Koons was awarded custody in the United States, but the Italian courts refused to accept any American jurisdiction. Mr. Koons won custody in Italy, but the ruling was overturned.

Two investigations were started internally within Europe and within Italy, but they were abruptly stopped when the Italian Supreme Court awarded his ex-wife custody, therefore covering up the tremendous injustices done to Mr. Koons and his son. Their ruling was based on the amount of time Ludwig had been kept in Italy since his abduction. Jeff has been allowed only strictly supervised visitation in Italy.

Mr. Speaker, this 1 minute is not just about Jeff and his son, Ludwig. It is about the 10,000 American children who have been abducted to foreign countries. These children, and the parents they were taken from, are suffering. This House must work together to solve this problem and bring our children home where they belong.

TRIBUTE TO FRANK GIARRIZZO

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

Mr. MANZULLO. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor of the House today to

commend the extraordinary work of Frank Giarrizzo in his efforts to alleviate hunger in Africa.

Ten years ago, Frank served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Malawi. Frank witnessed firsthand the despair brought on by the "hungry season." This is the time when the people run out of the food they have grown, and do not have the money to buy anything until their next crop is ready.

Rather than succumb to the hopelessness of the situation, Frank used it as motivation to solve the problem. He established a program in Malawi known as VEZA, or Village Enterprise Zone Associations. This nongovernment organization works in conjunction with local member associations to help farmers increase production. He helps erect silos in which locally grown grain will be stored until there is a food shortage, such as in the hungry season. The money received for the grain will help to refill the silos after the next harvest. These and other initiatives are all a part of VEZA's aim to alleviate hunger.

It is important to understand that thousands of people in Malawi are alive today thanks to Frank's determination. It is a living example of how one person can truly make a difference.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, I want to thank Frank Giarrizzo for his selfless efforts to improve the lives of others.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SHAYS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take the time previously allotted to the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS).

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

There was no objection.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SPACE RESEARCH TO OUR COUNTRY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. WELDON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I would like this afternoon to talk about NASA and the recent report regarding the Mars program, as well as a

recent poll taken by the Zogby Organization.

As most Americans know, NASA and its efforts to put a man on the moon and our space shuttle from become an integral part of America's history, and as well American culture. Furthermore, it is common knowledge that NASA and its exploits in space is a tremendous motivating factor for young people to study math and science. Indeed, there is an entire generation of Americans who now work in areas of high technology, science and mathematics who were originally naturally motivated to get involved in that arena because of the space race and the tremendous attraction of space.

Indeed, when I travel around the United States and talk to teachers, one of the things I hear over and over again when I tell them where I am from, which is an area of Florida that includes Kennedy Space Center and Cape Canaveral, when I tell them that, they invariably tell me that one of the things that helps them in motivating their kids to take an interest in the study of math and science is the space program and talking to them about the applications of our space program to the future.

Indeed, a recent poll that was released by the Zogby Organization bears up a lot of what I am talking about. This chart I have to my left here gets into this. They asked the following questions, and they had other questions, but I want to focus on these two statements. The first statement is: NASA and space exploration in general is a total waste of taxpayer dollars. The second statement is: the exploration of space is vital to the future of the United States and the world no matter what the cost.

I was very surprised, because amongst young people ages 18 to 29, by a ratio of almost 5 to 1, they supported the second statement rather than the first statement, which contends that space exploration is not important.

When we look at people ages 30 to 39, almost the same ratio, 5 to 1, support NASA. Even amongst the older generation, people over the age of 50, it is about a 2 to 1 ratio.

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It averages out, as I show here, to about three to one actually support the ongoing investment in space.

I know that NASA had a tough year last year in some of its areas. Certainly they had tremendous success, as well. There was the recent x-ray mapping mission involving the shuttle, which was a huge success. The Hubble repair mission, as well done by the shuttle, was a huge success. But as everybody knows, they had some failures on two probes that were supposed to go to Mars. I think what we need to do is certainly reassess and reevaluate our whole Mars program and how we are going about that.

It was originally proposed that this new approach would be called faster,

better, cheaper. The idea in mind is that you do not build a probe to Mars that takes 7 years to build, that costs \$1.5 billion, you build several smaller probes. This way, in case you lose one, the mission of exploring Mars can still move ahead.

I would assert that the fundamentals behind that philosophy were very, very good. It makes a lot of sense to have several smaller probes rather than one big one, because, indeed, in the past we have lost some of these big probes, which are very, very costly.

I would assert that the goal or the mission of faster, better, cheaper needs to be redefined to what it was originally intended to be, maybe something like smaller, swifter, and smarter. I believe that the intent was a good one to send multiple smaller probes, rather than one large probe.

I believe that the reassessment that is going on in the Mars program will ultimately end up yielding better value to the American taxpayer. If we are ever going to send people to Mars so that we can explore that planet, or indeed, even some day colonize Mars, it is critical that we send unmanned probes first to learn more about Mars.

Clearly, this poll shows us that the American people are still behind a strong effort to explore space. We are a Nation of pioneers. That is in our spirit. It should always remain in our spirit. I believe we need to reassess what we are doing with Mars and move ahead with the same kind of focus, indeed, where we are trying to get better value for the American taxpayer and gain knowledge of outer space.

BOLSTERING AMERICA'S DEFENSES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GUTKNECHT). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, we just passed a supplemental appropriations bill which had what a lot of folks think was a fairly sizeable chunk of defense spending. It passed by a very large vote.

The vote surprised a number of Members, but I think the reason we had such a large vote, almost a three to one majority in favor of increased defense spending at this time, is because we have cut defense so drastically in the past.

I think most Americans do not realize that, actually, the defense budget we passed this year was approximately \$125 billion less than Ronald Reagan's defense budget of 1986.

Now, this chart here shows how defense spending has fallen like a rock over the last 13 years or so. Certainly the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, the fall of the Soviet Empire, which incidentally, was brought about by America having a strong national defense, but that dissolution means that we do not have to spend as much money on defense as we did in the 1980s.

However, it does not mean that we can absolutely abandon our troops. I am afraid this administration has put together a blueprint for defense over the next several years that, for practical purposes, abandons the troops. Let me go through some of the problems, Mr. Speaker.

Over the last 18 months or so, we have had about 80 crashes of American military aircraft. I have the crashes listed here. I know my colleagues cannot see this fine print, but that involved 90 dead pilots and crew members, and it involved almost every type of aircraft in the American inventory: helicopters, fixed wing, bombers, in some cases.

There was a reason for that. If we look at another graph, this graph shows how mission capability has dropped. Mission capability means the ability to turn on your airplane just like you would turn on the car in your driveway, put it in gear, make it go, and go off and do its mission and come back. So if I ask you, if you had two cars in your driveway and I called you up and said, what is your mission capability rate, and you said, just a minute, you went out, got in both the cars and tried to start them and only one would start and go into gear, you would come back to the phone and say, it is 50 percent, one out of two.

Our mission capability rate of our aircraft across the services over the last several years has been dropping because we are not spending enough money on spare parts, we are not spending enough time on training, do not have enough training money, and we have old airplanes, because we are not replacing the old airplanes with newer airplanes.

So if we look at the Air Force, it has gone from 83 percent mission capability down to 74 percent. That means about 25 percent of the airplanes cannot get off the ground in the Air Force today.

In the Marine Corps, it has dropped from 77 percent to 61 percent. That means about 40 percent of our marine aircraft cannot get off the ground today. In the Navy, it has gone from 69 percent to 61 percent. That means, again, about 40 percent of our Navy aircraft cannot get off the ground and go do their missions.

A lot of Americans do not realize that we have cut our forces down drastically. This chart shows that since Desert Storm, we have cut our forces in America almost in half. These red tanks indicate what we had in 1991, and the blue tanks indicate what we had in 1992 with respect to the Army. So we went from 18 Army divisions to only 10, 546 Navy ships to only about 316 today, and 36 fighter airwings to only about 20.

Unfortunately, the small military that we have today is not as ready to fight as the big military that we had a few years ago because we have cut funding for the military too drastically.