

they do business. OGE has played an essential and significant role in fostering the public's trust in the integrity of government.

Mr. Speaker, there is no component of government more important than that of assuring the public's trust. OGE helps to build and maintain that kind of trust that is essential for an orderly, ethical, and respectable conduct of the Nation's business. For those reasons, I urge swift passage of this bill.

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

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

I want to thank the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) for his words and tell him that I do value working with him on the Subcommittee on Civil Service and Agency Organization. I also want to thank Senator LIEBERMAN who chairs the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs for his sponsorship of this bill. Indeed, accolades to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON), the chairman of the committee on Government Reform and Oversight, and the gentleman from California (Mr. WAXMAN), the ranking member, for their support of this legislation. Also, thanks should go to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER), the chairman of the Committee on the Judiciary, for his cooperation in expediting consideration of this measure.

Mr. Speaker, promoting high ethical standards in the Federal Government is critically important if the citizens of this country are to have confidence in its operation. For this reason, I urge all Members to support S. 1202 and the reauthorization of the Office of Government Ethics.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill, S. 1202.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

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

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

□ 1100

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FAMILY COURT ACT OF 2001

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendment to the bill (H.R. 2657) to amend title 11, District of Co-

lumbia Code, to redesignate the Family Division of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia as the Family Court of the Superior Court, to recruit and retain trained and experienced judges to serve in the Family Court, to promote consistency and efficiency in the assignment of judges to the Family Court and in the consideration of actions and proceedings in the Family Court, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

Senate amendment:

Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "District of Columbia Family Court Act of 2001".

SEC. 2. REDESIGNATION OF FAMILY DIVISION AS FAMILY COURT OF THE SUPERIOR COURT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 11-902, District of Columbia Code, is amended to read as follows:

“§ 11-902. Organization of the court

“(a) IN GENERAL.—The Superior Court shall consist of the following:

“(1) The Civil Division.

“(2) The Criminal Division.

“(3) The Family Court.

“(4) The Probate Division.

“(5) The Tax Division.

“(b) BRANCHES.—The divisions of the Superior Court may be divided into such branches as the Superior Court may by rule prescribe.

“(c) DESIGNATION OF PRESIDING JUDGE OF FAMILY COURT.—The chief judge of the Superior Court shall designate one of the judges assigned to the Family Court of the Superior Court to serve as the presiding judge of the Family Court of the Superior Court.

“(d) JURISDICTION DESCRIBED.—The Family Court shall have original jurisdiction over the actions, applications, determinations, adjudications, and proceedings described in section 11-1101. Actions, applications, determinations, adjudications, and proceedings being assigned to cross-jurisdictional units established by the Superior Court, including the Domestic Violence Unit, on the date of enactment of this section may continue to be so assigned after the date of enactment of this section.”.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT TO CHAPTER 9.—Section 11-906(b), District of Columbia Code, is amended by inserting “the Family Court and” before “the various divisions”.

(c) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS TO CHAPTER 11.—(1) The heading for chapter 11 of title 11, District of Columbia, is amended by striking “FAMILY DIVISION” and inserting “FAMILY COURT”.

(2) The item relating to chapter 11 in the table of chapters for title 11, District of Columbia, is amended by striking “FAMILY DIVISION” and inserting “FAMILY COURT”.

(d) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS TO TITLE 16.—(1) CALCULATION OF CHILD SUPPORT.—Section 16-916.1(o)(6), District of Columbia Code, is amended by striking “Family Division” and inserting “Family Court of the Superior Court”.

(2) EXPEDITED JUDICIAL HEARING OF CASES BROUGHT BEFORE HEARING COMMISSIONERS.—Section 16-924, District of Columbia Code, is amended by striking “Family Division” each place it appears in subsections (a) and (f) and inserting “Family Court”.

(3) GENERAL REFERENCES TO PROCEEDINGS.—Chapter 23 of title 16, District of Columbia Code, is amended by inserting after section 16-2301 the following new section:

“§ 16-2301.1. References deemed to refer to Family Court of the Superior Court

“Any reference in this chapter or any other Federal or District of Columbia law, Executive order, rule, regulation, delegation of authority, or any document of or pertaining to the Family

Division of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia shall be deemed to refer to the Family Court of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia.”.

(4) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for subchapter I of chapter 23 of title 16, District of Columbia, is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 16-2301 the following new item:

“16-2301.1. References deemed to refer to Family Court of the Superior Court.”.

SEC. 3. APPOINTMENT AND ASSIGNMENT OF JUDGES; NUMBER AND QUALIFICATIONS.

(a) NUMBER OF JUDGES FOR FAMILY COURT; QUALIFICATIONS AND TERMS OF SERVICE.—Chapter 9 of title 11, District of Columbia Code, is amended by inserting after section 11-908 the following new section:

“§ 11-908A. Special rules regarding assignment and service of judges of Family Court

“(a) NUMBER OF JUDGES.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The number of judges serving on the Family Court of the Superior Court shall be not more than 15.

“(2) EMERGENCY REASSIGNMENT.—If the chief judge determines that, in order to carry out the intent and purposes of the District of Columbia Family Court Act of 2001, an emergency exists such that the number of judges needed on the Family Court of the Superior Court at any time is more than 15—

“(A) the chief judge may temporarily reassign judges from other divisions of the Superior Court to serve on the Family Court who meet the requirements of paragraphs (1) and (3) of subsection (b) or senior judges who meet the requirements of those paragraphs, except such reassigned judges shall not be subject to the term of service requirements set forth in subsection (c); and

“(B) the chief judge shall, within 30 days of emergency temporary reassignment pursuant to subparagraph (A), submit a report to the President and Congress describing—

“(i) the nature of the emergency;

“(ii) how the emergency was addressed, including which judges were reassigned; and

“(iii) whether and why an increase in the number of Family Court judges authorized in subsection (a)(1) may be necessary to serve the needs of families and children in the District of Columbia.

“(3) COMPOSITION.—The total number of judges on the Superior Court may exceed the limit on such judges specified in section 11-903 to the extent necessary to maintain the requirements of this subsection if—

“(A) the number of judges serving on the Family Court is less than 15; and

“(B) the Chief Judge of the Superior Court—

“(i) is unable to secure a volunteer judge who is sitting on the Superior Court outside of the Family Court for reassignment to the Family Court;

“(ii) obtains approval of the Joint Committee on Judicial Administration; and

“(iii) reports to Congress regarding the circumstances that gave rise to the necessity to exceed the cap.

“(b) QUALIFICATIONS.—The chief judge may not assign an individual to serve on the Family Court of the Superior Court or handle a Family Court case unless—

“(1) the individual has training or expertise in family law;

“(2) the individual certifies to the chief judge that the individual intends to serve the full term of service, except that this paragraph shall not apply with respect to individuals serving as senior judges under section 11-1504, individuals serving as temporary judges under section 11-908, and any other judge serving in another division of the Superior Court who is reassigned on an emergency temporary basis pursuant to subsection (a)(2);

“(3) the individual certifies to the chief judge that the individual will participate in the ongoing training programs carried out for judges of the Family Court under section 11–1104(c); and

“(4) the individual meets the requirements of section 11–1501(b).

“(c) TERM OF SERVICE.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), an individual assigned to serve as a judge of the Family Court of the Superior Court shall serve for a term of 5 years.

“(2) SPECIAL RULE FOR JUDGES SERVING ON SUPERIOR COURT ON DATE OF ENACTMENT OF FAMILY COURT ACT OF 2001.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—An individual assigned to serve as a judge of the Family Court of the Superior Court who is serving as a judge of the Superior Court on the date of the enactment of the District of Columbia Family Court Act of 2001 shall serve for a term of not fewer than 3 years.

“(B) REDUCTION OF PERIOD FOR JUDGES SERVING IN FAMILY DIVISION.—In the case of a judge of the Superior Court who is serving as a judge in the Family Division of the Court on the date of the enactment of the District of Columbia Family Court Act of 2001, the 3-year term applicable under subparagraph (A) shall be reduced by the length of any period of consecutive service as a judge in such Division immediately preceding the date of the enactment of such Act.

“(3) ASSIGNMENT FOR ADDITIONAL SERVICE.—After the term of service of a judge of the Family Court (as described in paragraph (1)) expires, at the judge's request and with the approval of the chief judge, the judge may be assigned for additional service on the Family Court for a period of such duration (consistent with section 431(c) of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act) as the chief judge may provide.

“(4) PERMITTING SERVICE ON FAMILY COURT FOR ENTIRE TERM.—At the request of the judge and with the approval of the chief judge, a judge may serve as a judge of the Family Court for the judge's entire term of service as a judge of the Superior Court under section 431(c) of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act.

“(d) REASSIGNMENT TO OTHER DIVISIONS.—The chief judge may reassign a judge of the Family Court to any division of the Superior Court if the chief judge determines that in the interest of justice the judge is unable to continue serving in the Family Court.”.

(b) PLAN FOR FAMILY COURT TRANSITION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the chief judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia shall prepare and submit to the President and Congress a transition plan for the Family Court of the Superior Court, and shall include in the plan the following:

(A) The chief judge's determination of the role and function of the presiding judge of the Family Court.

(B) The chief judge's determination of the number of judges needed to serve on the Family Court.

(C) The chief judge's determination of the number of magistrate judges of the Family Court needed for appointment under section 11–1732, District of Columbia Code.

(D) The chief judge's determination of the appropriate functions of such magistrate judges, together with the compensation of and other personnel matters pertaining to such magistrate judges.

(E) A plan for case flow, case management, and staffing needs (including the needs for both judicial and nonjudicial personnel) for the Family Court, including a description of how the Superior Court will handle the one family, one judge requirement pursuant to section 11–1104(a) for all cases and proceedings assigned to the Family Court.

(F) A plan for space, equipment, and other physical plant needs and requirements during the transition, as determined in consultation with the Administrator of General Services.

(G) An analysis of the number of magistrate judges needed under the expedited appointment

procedures established under section 6(d) in reducing the number of pending actions and proceedings within the jurisdiction of the Family Court (as described in section 11–902(d), District of Columbia, as amended by subsection (a)).

(H) Consistent with the requirements of paragraph (2), a proposal for the disposition or transfer to the Family Court of child abuse and neglect actions pending as of the date of enactment of this Act (which were initiated in the Family Division but remain pending before judges serving in other Divisions of the Superior Court as of such date) in a manner consistent with applicable Federal and District of Columbia law and best practices, including best practices developed by the American Bar Association and the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges.

(I) An estimate of the number of cases for which the deadline for disposition or transfer to the Family Court, specified in paragraph (2)(B), cannot be met and the reasons why such deadline cannot be met.

(2) IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN FOR TRANSFER OR DISPOSITION OF ACTIONS AND PROCEEDINGS TO FAMILY COURT.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subparagraph (C), the chief judge of the Superior Court and the presiding judge of the Family Court shall take such steps as may be required as provided in the proposal for disposition of actions and proceedings under paragraph (1)(H) to ensure that each child abuse and neglect action of the Superior Court (as described in section 11–902(d), District of Columbia Code, as amended by subsection (a)) is transferred to the Family Court or otherwise disposed of as provided in subparagraph (B).

(B) DEADLINE.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act or any amendment made by this Act and except as provided in subparagraph (C), no child abuse or neglect action shall remain pending with a judge not serving on the Family Court upon the expiration of 18 months after the filing of the transition plan required under paragraph (1).

(ii) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—The chief judge of the Superior Court should make every effort to provide for the earliest practicable disposition of actions. Nothing in this subparagraph shall preclude the immediate transfer of cases to the Family Court, particularly cases which have been filed with the court for less than 6 months prior to the date of enactment of this Act.

(C) RETAINED CASES.—Child abuse and neglect cases that were initiated in the Family Division but remain pending before judges, including senior judges as defined in section 11–1504, District of Columbia Code, in other Divisions of the Superior Court as of the date of enactment of this Act may remain before judges, including senior judges, in such other Divisions when—

(i) the case remains at all times in full compliance with Public Law 105–89, if applicable;

(ii) the chief judge determines, in consultation with the presiding judge of the Family Court, based on the record in the case and any unique expertise, training, or knowledge of the case that the judge might have, that permitting the judge to retain the case would lead to permanent placement of the child more quickly than reassignment to a judge in the Family Court.

(D) PRIORITY FOR CERTAIN ACTIONS AND PROCEEDINGS.—The chief judge of the Superior Court, in consultation with the presiding judge of the Family Court, shall give priority consideration to the disposition or transfer of the following actions and proceedings:

(i) The action or proceeding involves an allegation of abuse or neglect.

(ii) The action or proceeding was initiated in the family division prior to the 2-year period which ends on the date of enactment of this Act.

(iii) The judge to whom the action or proceeding is assigned as of the date of enactment of this Act is not assigned to the Family Division.

(E) PROGRESS REPORTS.—The chief judge of the Superior Court shall submit reports to the President, to the Committee on Appropriations of each House, the Committee on Governmental Affairs of the Senate, and the Committee on Government Reform of the House of Representatives at 6-month intervals for a period of 2 years after the date of submission of the transition plan required under paragraph (1) on the progress made towards disposing of actions or proceedings described in subparagraph (B).

(F) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this subsection shall preclude the chief judge, in consultation with the presiding judge of the Family Court, from transferring actions or proceedings pending before judges outside the Family Court at the enactment of this Act which do not involve allegations of abuse and neglect but which would otherwise fall under the jurisdiction of the Family Court to judges in the Family Court prior to the deadline as defined in subparagraph 2(B), particularly if such transfer would result in more efficient resolution of such actions or proceedings.

(3) EFFECTIVE DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION OF PLAN.—The chief judge of the Superior Court may not take any action to implement the transition plan under this subsection until the expiration of the 30-day period which begins on the date the chief judge submits the plan to the President and Congress under paragraph (1).

(c) TRANSITION TO REQUIRED NUMBER OF JUDGES.—

(1) ANALYSIS BY CHIEF JUDGE OF SUPERIOR COURT.—The chief judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia shall include in the transition plan prepared under subsection (b)—

(A) the chief judge's determination of the number of individuals serving as judges of the Superior Court who—

(i) meet the qualifications for judges of the Family Court of the Superior Court under section 11–908A, District of Columbia Code (as added by subsection (a)); and

(ii) are willing and able to serve on the Family Court; and

(B) if the chief judge determines that the number of individuals described in subparagraph (A) is less than 15, a request that the Judicial Nomination Commission recruit and the President nominate (in accordance with section 433 of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act) such additional number of individuals to serve on the Superior Court who meet the qualifications for judges of the Family Court under section 11–908A, District of Columbia Code, as may be required to enable the chief judge to make the required number of assignments.

(2) ROLE OF DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA JUDICIAL NOMINATION COMMISSION.—For purposes of section 434(d)(1) of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act, the submission of a request from the chief judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia under paragraph (1)(B) shall be deemed to create a number of vacancies in the position of judge of the Superior Court equal to the number of additional appointments so requested by the chief judge, except that the deadline for the submission by the District of Columbia Judicial Nomination Commission of nominees to fill such vacancies shall be 90 days after the creation of such vacancies. In carrying out this paragraph, the District of Columbia Judicial Nomination Commission shall recruit individuals for possible nomination and appointment to the Superior Court who meet the qualifications for judges of the Family Court of the Superior Court.

(d) REPORT BY COMPTROLLER GENERAL.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 2 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General shall prepare and submit to Congress and the chief judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia a report on the implementation of this Act (including the implementation of the transition plan under subsection (b)), and shall include in the report the following:

(A) An analysis of the procedures used to make the initial appointments of judges of the Family Court under this Act and the amendments made by this Act, including an analysis of the time required to make such appointments and the effect of the qualification requirements for judges of the Court (including requirements relating to the length of service on the Court) on the time required to make such appointments.

(B) An analysis of the impact of magistrate judges for the Family Court (including the expedited initial appointment of magistrate judges for the Court under section 6(d)) on the workload of judges and other personnel of the Court.

(C) An analysis of the number of judges needed for the Family Court, including an analysis of how the number may be affected by the qualification requirements for judges, the availability of magistrate judges, and other provisions of this Act or the amendments made by this Act.

(D) An analysis of the timeliness of the resolution and disposition of pending actions and proceedings required under the transition plan (as described in paragraphs (1)(I) and (2) of subsection (b)), including an analysis of the effect of the availability of magistrate judges on the time required to resolve and dispose of such actions and proceedings.

(2) SUBMISSION TO CHIEF JUDGE OF SUPERIOR COURT.—Prior to submitting the report under paragraph (1) to Congress, the Comptroller General shall provide a preliminary version of the report to the chief judge of the Superior Court and shall take any comments and recommendations of the chief judge into consideration in preparing the final version of the report.

(e) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The first sentence of section 11-908(a), District of Columbia Code, is amended by striking “The chief judge” and inserting “Subject to section 11-908A, the chief judge”.

(f) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for chapter 9 of title 11, District of Columbia Code, is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 11-908 the following new item:

“11-908A. Special rules regarding assignment and service of judges of Family Court.”.

SEC. 4. IMPROVING ADMINISTRATION OF CASES AND PROCEEDINGS IN FAMILY COURT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 11 of title 11, District of Columbia, is amended by striking section 1101 and inserting the following:

§ 11-1101. Jurisdiction of the Family Court

“(a) IN GENERAL.—The Family Court of the District of Columbia shall be assigned and have original jurisdiction over—

“(1) actions for divorce from the bond of marriage and legal separation from bed and board, including proceedings incidental thereto for alimony, pendente lite and permanent, and for support and custody of minor children;

“(2) applications for revocation of divorce from bed and board;

“(3) actions to enforce support of any person as required by law;

“(4) actions seeking custody of minor children, including petitions for writs of habeas corpus;

“(5) actions to declare marriages void;

“(6) actions to declare marriages valid;

“(7) actions for annulments of marriage;

“(8) determinations and adjudications of property rights, both real and personal, in any action referred to in this section, irrespective of any jurisdictional limitation imposed on the Superior Court;

“(9) proceedings in adoption;

“(10) proceedings under the Act of July 10, 1957 (D.C. Code, secs. 30-301 to 30-324);

“(11) proceedings to determine paternity of any child born out of wedlock;

“(12) civil proceedings for protection involving intrafamily offenses, instituted pursuant to chapter 10 of title 16;

“(13) proceedings in which a child, as defined in section 16-2301, is alleged to be delinquent, neglected, or in need of supervision;

“(14) proceedings under chapter 5 of title 21 relating to the commitment of the mentally ill;

“(15) proceedings under chapter 13 of title 7 relating to the commitment of the at least moderately mentally retarded; and

“(16) proceedings under Interstate Compact on Juveniles (described in title IV of the District of Columbia Court Reform and Criminal Procedure Act of 1970).

“(b) DEFINITION.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—In this chapter, the term ‘action or proceeding’ with respect to the Family Court refers to cause of action described in paragraphs (1) through (16) of subsection (a).

“(2) EXCEPTION.—An action or proceeding may be assigned to or retained by cross-jurisdictional units established by the Superior Court, including the Domestic Violence Unit.

§ 11-1102. Use of alternative dispute resolution

“To the greatest extent practicable and safe, cases and proceedings in the Family Court of the Superior Court shall be resolved through alternative dispute resolution procedures, in accordance with such rules as the Superior Court may promulgate.

§ 11-1103. Standards of practice for appointed counsel

“The Superior Court shall establish standards of practice for attorneys appointed as counsel in the Family Court of the Superior Court.

§ 11-1104. Administration

“(a) ‘ONE FAMILY, ONE JUDGE’ REQUIREMENT FOR CASES AND PROCEEDINGS.—To the greatest extent practicable, feasible, and lawful, if an individual who is a party to an action or proceeding assigned to the Family Court has an immediate family or household member who is a party to another action or proceeding assigned to the Family Court, the individual’s action or proceeding shall be assigned to the same judge or magistrate judge to whom the immediate family member’s action or proceeding is assigned.

“(b) RETENTION OF JURISDICTION OVER CASES.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—In addition to the requirement of subsection (a), any action or proceeding assigned to the Family Court of the Superior Court shall remain under the jurisdiction of the Family Court until the action or proceeding is finally disposed, except as provided in paragraph (2)(D).

“(2) ONE FAMILY, ONE JUDGE.—

“(A) FOR THE DURATION.—An action or proceeding assigned pursuant to this subsection shall remain with the judge or magistrate judge in the Family Court to whom the action or proceeding is assigned for the duration of the action or proceeding to the greatest extent practicable, feasible, and lawful, subject to subparagraph (C).

“(B) ALL CASES INVOLVING AN INDIVIDUAL.—If an individual who is a party to an action or proceeding assigned to the Family Court becomes a party to another action or proceeding assigned to the Family Court, the individual’s subsequent action or proceeding shall be assigned to the same judge or magistrate judge to whom the individual’s initial action or proceeding is assigned to the greatest extent practicable and feasible.

“(C) FAMILY COURT CASE RETENTION.—If the full term of a Family Court judge to whom the action or proceeding is assigned is completed prior to the final disposition of the action or proceeding, the presiding judge of the Family Court shall ensure that the matter or proceeding is reassigned to a judge serving on the Family Court.

“(D) EXCEPTION.—A judge whose full term on the Family Court is completed but who remains in Superior Court may retain the case or proceeding for not more than 6 months or, in ex-

traordinary circumstances, for not more than 12 months after ceasing to serve if—

“(i) the case remains at all times in full compliance with Public Law 105-89, if applicable; and

“(ii) if Public Law 105-89 is applicable, the chief judge determines, in consultation with the presiding judge of the Family Court, based on the record in the case and any unique expertise, training or knowledge of the case that the judge might have, that permitting the judge to retain the case would lead to permanent placement of the child more quickly than reassignment to a judge in the Family Court.

“(3) STANDARDS OF JUDICIAL ETHICS.—The actions of a judge or magistrate judge in retaining an action or proceeding under this paragraph shall be subject to applicable standards of judicial ethics.

“(c) TRAINING PROGRAM.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The chief judge, in consultation with the presiding judge of the Family Court, shall carry out an ongoing program to provide training in family law and related matters for judges of the Family Court and other judges of the Superior Court who are assigned Family Court cases, including magistrate judges, attorneys who practice in the Family Court, and appropriate nonjudicial personnel, and shall include in the program information and instruction regarding the following:

“(A) Child development.

“(B) Family dynamics, including domestic violence.

“(C) Relevant Federal and District of Columbia laws.

“(D) Permanency planning principles and practices.

“(E) Recognizing the risk factors for child abuse.

“(F) Any other matters the presiding judge considers appropriate.

“(2) USE OF CROSS-TRAINING.—The program carried out under this section shall use the resources of lawyers and legal professionals, social workers, and experts in the field of child development and other related fields.

“(d) ACCESSIBILITY OF MATERIALS, SERVICES, AND PROCEEDINGS; PROMOTION OF ‘FAMILY-FRIENDLY’ ENVIRONMENT.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—To the greatest extent practicable, the chief judge and the presiding judge of the Family Court shall ensure that the materials and services provided by the Family Court are understandable and accessible to the individuals and families served by the Family Court, and that the Family Court carries out its duties in a manner which reflects the special needs of families with children.

“(2) LOCATION OF PROCEEDINGS.—To the maximum extent feasible, safe, and practicable, cases and proceedings in the Family Court shall be conducted at locations readily accessible to the parties involved.

“(e) INTEGRATED COMPUTERIZED CASE TRACKING AND MANAGEMENT SYSTEM.—The Executive Officer of the District of Columbia courts under section 11-1703 shall work with the chief judge of the Superior Court—

“(1) to ensure that all records and materials of cases and proceedings in the Family Court are stored and maintained in electronic format accessible by computers for the use of judges, magistrate judges, and nonjudicial personnel of the Family Court, and for the use of other appropriate offices of the District government in accordance with the plan for integrating computer systems prepared by the Mayor of the District of Columbia under section 4(b) of the District of Columbia Family Court Act of 2001;

“(2) to establish and operate an electronic tracking and management system for cases and proceedings in the Family Court for the use of judges and nonjudicial personnel of the Family Court, using the records and materials stored and maintained pursuant to paragraph (1); and

“(3) to expand such system to cover all divisions of the Superior Court as soon as practicable.

§11-1105. Social services and other related services

“(a) ONSITE COORDINATION OF SERVICES AND INFORMATION.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Mayor of the District of Columbia, in consultation with the chief judge of the Superior Court, shall ensure that representatives of the appropriate offices of the District government which provide social services and other related services to individuals and families served by the Family Court (including the District of Columbia Public Schools, the District of Columbia Housing Authority, the Child and Family Services Agency, the Office of the Corporation Counsel, the Metropolitan Police Department, the Department of Health, and other offices determined by the Mayor) are available on-site at the Family Court to coordinate the provision of such services and information regarding such services to such individuals and families.

“(2) DUTIES OF HEADS OF OFFICES.—The head of each office described in paragraph (1), including the Superintendent of the District of Columbia Public Schools and the Director of the District of Columbia Housing Authority, shall provide the Mayor with such information, assistance, and services as the Mayor may require to carry out such paragraph.

“(b) APPOINTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES LIAISON WITH FAMILY COURT.—The Mayor of the District of Columbia shall appoint an individual to serve as a liaison between the Family Court and the District government for purposes of subsection (a) and for coordinating the delivery of services provided by the District government with the activities of the Family Court and for providing information to the judges, magistrate judges, and nonjudicial personnel of the Family Court regarding the services available from the District government to the individuals and families served by the Family Court. The Mayor shall provide on an ongoing basis information to the chief judge of the Superior Court and the presiding judge of the Family Court regarding the services of the District government which are available for the individuals and families served by the Family Court.

§11-1106. Reports to Congress

“Not later than 90 days after the end of each calendar year, the chief judge of the Superior Court shall submit a report to Congress on the activities of the Family Court during the year, and shall include in the report the following:

“(1) The chief judge’s assessment of the productivity and success of the use of alternative dispute resolution pursuant to section 11-1102.

“(2) Goals and timetables as required by the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 to improve the Family Court’s performance in the following year.

“(3) Information on the extent to which the Family Court met deadlines and standards applicable under Federal and District of Columbia law to the review and disposition of actions and proceedings under the Family Court’s jurisdiction during the year.

“(4) Information on the progress made in establishing locations and appropriate space for the Family Court that are consistent with the mission of the Family Court until such time as the locations and space are established.

“(5) Information on any factors which are not under the control of the Family Court which interfere with or prevent the Family Court from carrying out its responsibilities in the most effective manner possible.

“(6) Information on—

“(A) the number of judges serving on the Family Court as of the end of the year;

“(B) how long each such judge has served on the Family Court;

“(C) the number of cases retained outside the Family Court;

“(D) the number of reassessments to and from the Family Court; and

“(E) the ability to recruit qualified sitting judges to serve on the Family Court.

“(7) Based on outcome measures derived through the use of the information stored in electronic format under section 11-1104(d), an analysis of the Family Court’s efficiency and effectiveness in managing its case load during the year, including an analysis of the time required to dispose of actions and proceedings among the various categories of the Family Court’s jurisdiction, as prescribed by applicable law and best practices, including (but not limited to) best practices developed by the American Bar Association and the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges.

“(8) If the Family Court failed to meet the deadlines, standards, and outcome measures described in the previous paragraphs, a proposed remedial action plan to address the failure.”

(b) EXPEDITED APPEALS FOR CERTAIN FAMILY COURT ACTIONS AND PROCEEDINGS.—Section 11-721, District of Columbia Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(g) Any appeal from an order of the Family Court of the District of Columbia terminating parental rights or granting or denying petition to adopt shall receive expedited review by the District of Columbia Court of Appeals.”.

(c) PLAN FOR INTEGRATING COMPUTER SYSTEMS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 6 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Mayor of the District of Columbia shall submit to the President and Congress a plan for integrating the computer systems of the District government with the computer systems of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia so that the Family Court of the Superior Court and the appropriate offices of the District government which provide social services and other related services to individuals and families served by the Family Court of the Superior Court (including the District of Columbia Public Schools, the District of Columbia Housing Authority, the Child and Family Services Agency, the Office of the Corporation Counsel, the Metropolitan Police Department, the Department of Health, and other offices determined by the Mayor) will be able to access and share information on the individuals and families served by the Family Court.

(2) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to the Mayor of the District of Columbia such sums as may be necessary to carry out paragraph (1).

(d) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for chapter 11 of title 11, District of Columbia Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new items:

“11-1102. Use of alternative dispute resolution.

“11-1103. Standards of practice for appointed counsel.

“11-1104. Administration.

“11-1105. Social services and other related services.

“11-1106. Reports to Congress.”.

SEC. 5. TREATMENT OF HEARING COMMISSIONERS AS MAGISTRATE JUDGES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—

(1) REDESIGNATION OF TITLE.—Section 11-1732, District of Columbia Code, is amended—

(A) by striking “hearing commissioners” each place it appears in subsection (a), subsection (b), subsection (d), subsection (i), subsection (l), and subsection (n) and inserting “magistrate judges”;

(B) by striking “hearing commissioner” each place it appears in subsection (b), subsection (c), subsection (e), subsection (f), subsection (g), subsection (h), and subsection (j) and inserting “magistrate judge”;

(C) by striking “hearing commissioner’s” each place it appears in subsection (e) and subsection (k) and inserting “magistrate judge’s”;

(D) by striking “Hearing commissioners” each place it appears in subsections (b), (d), and (i) and inserting “Magistrate judges”; and

(E) in the heading, by striking “Hearing commissioners” and inserting “Magistrate judges”.

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Section 16-924, District of Columbia Code, is amended—

(A) by striking “hearing commissioner” each place it appears and inserting “magistrate judge”; and

(B) in subsection (f), by striking “hearing commissioner’s” and inserting “magistrate judge’s”.

(3) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The item relating to section 11-1732 of the table of sections of chapter 17 of title 11, D.C. Code, is amended to read as follows:

“11-1732. Magistrate judges.”.

(b) TRANSITION PROVISION REGARDING HEARING COMMISSIONERS.—Any individual serving as a hearing commissioner under section 11-1732 of the District of Columbia Code as of the date of the enactment of this Act shall serve the remainder of such individual’s term as a magistrate judge, and may be reappointed as a magistrate judge in accordance with section 11-1732(d), District of Columbia Code, except that any individual serving as a hearing commissioner as of the date of the enactment of this Act who was appointed as a hearing commissioner prior to the effective date of section 11-1732 of the District of Columbia Code shall not be required to be a resident of the District of Columbia to be eligible to be reappointed.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect on the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 6. SPECIAL RULES FOR MAGISTRATE JUDGES OF FAMILY COURT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 17 of title 11, District of Columbia Code, is amended by inserting after section 11-1732 the following new section:

“§11-1732A. Special rules for magistrate judges of the Family Court of the Superior Court and the Domestic Violence Unit

“(a) USE OF SOCIAL WORKERS IN ADVISORY MERIT SELECTION PANEL.—The advisory selection merit panel used in the selection of magistrate judges for the Family Court of the Superior Court under section 11-1732(b) shall include certified social workers specializing in child welfare matters who are residents of the District and who are not employees of the District of Columbia Courts.

“(b) SPECIAL QUALIFICATIONS.—Notwithstanding section 11-1732(c), no individual shall be appointed or assigned as a magistrate judge for the Family Court of the Superior Court or as a magistrate judge for the Domestic Violence Unit handling actions or proceedings which would otherwise be under the jurisdiction of the Family Court unless that individual—

“(1) is a citizen of the United States;

“(2) is an active member of the unified District of Columbia Bar;

“(3) for the 5 years immediately preceding the appointment has been engaged in the active practice of law in the District, has been on the faculty of a law school in the District, or has been employed as a lawyer by the United States or District government, or any combination thereof;

“(4) has not fewer than 3 years of training or experience in the practice of family law as a lawyer or judicial officer; and

“(5) is a bona fide resident of the District of Columbia and has maintained an actual place of abode in the District for at least 90 days immediately prior to appointment, and retains such residency during service as a magistrate judge; or

“(B) is a bona fide resident of the areas consisting of Montgomery and Prince George’s Counties in Maryland, Arlington and Fairfax Counties, and the City of Alexandria in Virginia, has maintained an actual place of abode in such area, areas, or the District of Columbia for at least 5 years prior to appointment, and certifies that the individual will become a bona fide resident of the District of Columbia not later than 90 days after appointment.

(c) SERVICE OF CURRENT HEARING COMMISSIONERS.—Those individuals serving as hearing

commissioners under section 11-1732 on the effective date of this section who meet the qualifications described in subsection (b)(4) may request to be appointed as magistrate judges for the Family Court of the Superior Court under such section.

“(d) FUNCTIONS OF FAMILY COURT AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE UNIT MAGISTRATES.—A magistrate judge, when specifically designated by the chief judge in consultation with the appropriate presiding judge to serve in the Family Court or in the Domestic Violence Unit and subject to the rules of the Superior Court and the right of review under section 11-1732(k), may perform the following functions:

“(1) Administer oaths and affirmations and take acknowledgements.

“(2) Subject to the rules of the Superior Court and applicable Federal and District of Columbia law, conduct hearings, make findings and enter interim and final orders or judgments in uncontested or contested proceedings within the jurisdiction of the Family Court and the Domestic Violence Unit of the Superior Court (as described in section 11-1101), excluding jury trials and trials of felony cases, as assigned by the appropriate presiding judge.

“(3) Subject to the rules of the Superior Court, enter an order punishing an individual for contempt, except that no individual may be detained pursuant to the authority of this paragraph for longer than 180 days.

“(e) LOCATION OF PROCEEDINGS.—To the maximum extent feasible, safe, and practicable, magistrate judges of the Family Court of the Superior Court shall conduct proceedings at locations readily accessible to the parties involved.

“(f) TRAINING.—The chief judge, in consultation with the presiding judge of the Family Court of the Superior Court, shall ensure that all magistrate judges of the Family Court receive training to enable them to fulfill their responsibilities, including specialized training in family law and related matters.”.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—(1) Section 11-1732(a), District of Columbia Code, is amended by inserting after “the duties enumerated in subsection (j) of this section” the following: “(or, in the case of magistrate judges for the Family Court or the Domestic Violence Unit of the Superior Court, the duties enumerated in section 11-1732A(d))”.

(2) Section 11-1732(c), District of Columbia Code, is amended by striking “No individual” and inserting “Except as provided in section 11-1732A(b), no individual”.

(3) Section 11-1732(k), District of Columbia Code, is amended—

(A) by striking “subsection (j),” and inserting the following: “subsection (j) (or proceedings and hearings under section 11-1732A(d), in the case of magistrate judges for the Family Court or the Domestic Violence Unit of the Superior Court);” and

(B) by inserting after “appropriate division”, the following: “(or, in the case of an order or judgment of a magistrate judge of the Family Court or the Domestic Violence Unit of the Superior Court, by a judge of the Family Court or the Domestic Violence Unit)”.

(4) Section 11-1732(l), District of Columbia Code, is amended by inserting after “responsibilities” the following: “(subject to the requirements of section 11-1732A(f) in the case of magistrate judges of the Family Court of the Superior Court or the Domestic Violence Unit)”.

(c) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for subchapter II of chapter 17 of title 11, District of Columbia, is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 11-1732 the following new item:

“11-1732A. Special rules for magistrate judges of the Family Court of the Superior Court and the Domestic Violence Unit.”.

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect on the date of enactment of this Act.

(2) EXPEDITED INITIAL APPOINTMENTS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the chief judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia shall appoint individuals to serve as magistrate judges for the Family Division of the Superior Court in accordance with the requirements of sections 11-1732 and 11-1732A, District of Columbia Code (as added by subsection (a)), for the purpose of assisting with the implementation of the transition plan under section 3(b) of this Act, and in particular with the transition or disposal of actions or proceedings pursuant to section 3(b)(2) of this Act.

(B) TRANSITION RESPONSIBILITIES OF INITIALLY APPOINTED FAMILY COURT MAGISTRATES.—The chief judge of the Superior Court and the presiding judge of the Family Division of the Superior Court (acting jointly) shall first assign the magistrate judges of Family Court appointed under this paragraph to work with judges to whom the cases are currently assigned in making case disposition or transfer decisions as follows:

(i) The action or proceeding involves an allegation of abuse or neglect.

(ii) The judge to whom the action or proceeding is assigned as of the date of enactment of this Act is not assigned to the Family Division.

(iii) The action or proceeding was initiated in the Family Division prior to the 2-year period which ends on the date of enactment of this Act.

(C) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to preclude magistrate judges appointed pursuant to this subsection from performing upon appointment any or all of the functions of magistrate judges of the Family Court or Domestic Violence Unit as set forth in subsection 11-1732A(d).

SEC. 7. SENSE OF CONGRESS REGARDING BORDER AGREEMENT WITH MARYLAND AND VIRGINIA.

It is the sense of Congress that the State of Maryland, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the District of Columbia should promptly enter into a border agreement to facilitate the timely and safe placement of children in the District of Columbia's welfare system in foster and kinship homes and other facilities in Maryland and Virginia.

SEC. 8. SENSE OF THE SENATE REGARDING THE USE OF COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATES.

It is the sense of the Senate that the chief judge of the Superior Court and the presiding judge of the Family Division should take all steps necessary to encourage, support, and improve the use of Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) in family court actions or proceedings.

SEC. 9. INTERIM REPORTS.

Not later than 12 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the chief judge of the Superior Court and the presiding judge of the Family Court—

(1) in consultation with the General Services Administration, shall submit to Congress a feasibility study for the construction, lease, or acquisition of appropriate permanent courts and facilities for the Family Court; and

(2) shall submit to Congress an analysis of the success of the use of magistrate judges under the expedited appointment procedures established under section 6(d) in reducing the number of pending actions and proceedings within the jurisdiction of the Family Court (as described in section 11-902(d), District of Columbia).

SEC. 10. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are authorized to be appropriated to the Courts of the District of Columbia and the District of Columbia such sums as may be necessary to carry out the amendments made by this Act.

SEC. 11. EFFECTIVE DATE.

The amendments made by this Act shall take effect upon enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ISAKSON). Pursuant to the rule, the

gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA) and the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the measure under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Maryland?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to concur in the Senate amendment to H.R. 2657, the District of Columbia Family Court Act of 2001. These Senate amendments have been approved by the sponsor of the legislation, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY), and the original cosponsors of the legislation, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. DAVIS), the gentlewoman from District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON), and myself, following diligent work between staff of both houses.

The Senate amendments before us raise the ceiling of the number of judges for the Family Court to 15 judges. This provision would enable the chief judge to address unforeseeable needs if judges and magistrates are not able to keep up with the caseload.

The amended bill further allows for emergency temporary reassignment of certain judges who are qualified to serve on the Family Court and who would not be subject to the length of term, should the 15 Family Court judges not be able to keep up with the docket. These temporary emergency judges are encouraged to volunteer to serve in this capacity to the greatest extent possible.

These provisions modify the restriction in the District of Columbia Code to allow the chief judge of the Superior Court to exceed the overall cap of 59 judges if necessary to maintain a full complement of 15 judges in Family Court. The amendments further provide that cases outside of the Family Court be allowed an 18-month transition period to return to the Family Court, and provide limited exception based on the records of the case.

Additionally, the amended bill establishes a priority for returning the backlog of cases to the Family Court within the transition period, and requires that when a Family Court judge leaves the bench, all the cases must remain in the Family Court, except under extraordinary circumstances. The judge may have 6 months or 12 months, if it can be demonstrated to the chief judge that taking the case out of the Family Court will lead to permanent accomplishment of the child more quickly than if the case remained in the court.

These cases must be in compliance with the Adoption and Safe Families

Act. It is hoped that only a small number of cases will be retained under this provision.

The Superior Court is required to report to Congress at 6-month intervals for 2 years. This provision will enable Congress to monitor the implementation of the reforms intended in the bill, including the transfer of cases back to the Family Court. Other reports are required by the Comptroller General, the chief judge, and the presiding judge of the Family Court at varying intervals.

The Senate amendments to the House measure, H.R. 2657, maintain the requirement of one family-one judge in cases decided by the Family Court, which include divorces, alimony, child support, adoptions, custody, writs of habeas corpus, and other proceedings. The core of this legislation is to serve the children and the families of our Nation's capital.

This legislation has been the culmination of many individual efforts, but I must especially thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY) for his leadership in making this legislation a reality.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to concur in the Senate amendments to H.R. 2657, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2657, and to ask the support of this House for the District of Columbia Family Court Act of 2001, a bill written as a bipartisan effort by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY) and me.

The bill contains the few amendments I informed the House on September 20 I could not add at that time because of the rush to get this bill to the floor in time to secure the necessary appropriation. I want to thank the Senate for assuring that these changes were included as Senate amendments to the bill.

I especially want to thank the current chairman of the Subcommittee on the District of Columbia, the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA), and the former chair, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY), for their leadership on this bill, but particular thanks are due to my friend and partner on this bill, the majority whip, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY).

The gentleman from Texas worked long and hard with me on this bill, and kept at it through tough negotiations when we had differences for more than a year until we both could agree on a final version. I appreciate the collegial way in which the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY) worked with me throughout. He has my special gratitude for the extra \$24 million that has been appropriated to fund the reforms that this bill mandates.

The Mayor and the City Council appreciate and support the work of the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY) on the bill, as well, and the respect he has shown for home rule throughout his negotiations with me on this bill.

The need to update the family division became a priority after the tragic death of Brianna Blackmond, an infant who was returned to her troubled mother without a hearing after it was alleged that lawyers representing all the parties, the social workers and the guardians *ad litem*, had certified that the child should be returned.

I must continue to emphasize that the D.C. City Council is far more familiar with the children and families of the city than we in Congress, and of course was best qualified to write this bill. However, when the Home Rule Act was passed in 1973, Congress withheld jurisdiction over D.C. courts. Therefore, I asked the Council to pass a resolution in support of the reforms in this bill, after scrutinizing it and offering recommendations for changes.

We have also worked closely with Mayor Anthony Williams and Chief Judge Rufus King and the judges of the Superior Court in writing the bill. We respected the concerns of the District in negotiating this bill.

The D.C. Family Court Act of 2001 is the first overhaul of our family division since 1970, when it was upgraded to be part of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia. No court or other institutions should go a full 30 years without a close examination of its strengths and weaknesses. I know that the subcommittee will assure that there is appropriate oversight to the implementation of the bill by our subcommittee.

The Family Division has not been able to meet adequately intractable societal problems and additionally has had to depend on an outside agency, the Child Family Services Agency, which until recently had been in a Federal court receivership.

Our bill incorporates what we found in our investigation to be the best practices from successful independent family courts and family courts that are integrated into general jurisdiction courts all across the country.

These courts have in common these basic reforms: An independent family court or division; ample family court judges to handle family matters; terms for judges in the family court; family court judges, magistrate judges, and other court personnel trained or expert in family law; ongoing training of family court judges; alternative dispute resolution or mediation in family cases; only one judge for each family; family cases only in the Family Court; magistrate judges to assist family court judges with their caseloads; and special magistrate judges to assist judges with current pending cases.

The D.C. Family Court Act incorporates all these best practices.

Mr. Speaker, let me conclude by saying that I am particularly pleased that in the amendments to the bill we were able to address several problems with the House bill that I first raised on this floor.

These Senate amendments are important to ensure that, for example, the

necessary work of disposing of a large volume of pending cases and continuing intake of new cases coming into the new Family Court does not overwhelm the new court, while it meets timetables mandated in the bill.

In addition, the Senate amendments will ensure that the jurisdiction of the court's successful domestic violence unit is not undermined.

We have all agreed that the successful disposition of these and other matters resolved with our Senate partners have produced a strong bipartisan consensus bill. I want to, once again, thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY) for his tireless efforts and partnership with me on this bill, and for his great concern for the children and families of the District of Columbia; a concern that was always there, always evident, and that energized his hard work with me throughout; and, of course, the Chair of the subcommittee, the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA), as well as my good friend, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. DAVIS), for their special efforts on this important piece of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of our colleagues to support this bill, and thank all who assisted us on it.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I thank the ranking member of the Subcommittee on the District of Columbia, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON), for her wonderful comments and for all the work that she put into this bill.

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY), who is not the sponsor but the genesis of this bill in terms of responding to the great needs in the District of Columbia, and he has been tenacious.

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding time to me, and congratulate her on a whole year of very hard work, the work she put in to bring this bill to the floor today.

I also want to add my thanks to the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON), who was tireless in standing up for the abused and neglected children of the District of Columbia, understanding that the District desperately needs to focus on the welfare of these children and the best interests of these children.

She understands that, and in the name of Brianna Blackmond, and maybe we should have named this bill for Brianna Blackmond, because this is the beginning of what I hope is a total reform effort to bring the kind of services and safe and permanent homes for children that are seriously abused.

I also thank the staff that worked on it, particularly on my staff, Dr. Cassie Bevan, who is tenacious in her efforts to see that these children receive the kind of services that they deserve.

These are children, Mr. Speaker, that are the most oppressed, the most

abused, not just in the District of Columbia, but all over the United States. The effort all over the United States is sort of focused here in our Nation's capital in trying to do the best we can.

There are 4,500 cases that are currently supervised outside the Family Division that can now be brought into the Family Division of the Superior Court upon the signature of the President of this bill, so maybe we can start working on this backlog and develop a system, a model system for the Nation's capital to take care of these children.

These are children that are dying, these are children that have been forgotten, in many cases. I remind my colleagues that this came to our attention not just through the death of Brianna Blackmond, but the child welfare system of the District was in receivership. It was in a mess.

The gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) understood this and worked with us closely, and was the driving force in making this happen.

But I have to tell my colleagues, this is only the first step in a reform effort in the District of Columbia that is desperately needed. Just this last summer, over 100 files were lost, 100 files. Let me explain what that means.

A child makes an outcry, he or she is being abused and neglected in one way or another; and the stories that we hear of what is happening to children, not just in the District of Columbia, but all across the Nation are just horrendous.

But this child makes an outcry for help, and looking for someone to help them, and a file is created on this child and then lost. We do not even know what has happened to these children. The perpetrator of the abuse and neglect on this child knows now that the child made an outcry, and who knows what has been done to that child that made the outcry.

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This is abhorrent and we can not stand for it any longer and we are not. And by passing this bill, this is the beginning of what I hope is once and for all a process that we will go through in the District of Columbia to bring these children out of an abusive situation, give them the services that they need and, most importantly, find them a safe and permanent home where they can look forward and have hope for a future that other children enjoy today. I think that is vitally important.

This is going to be a showcase hopefully for the Nation. And, colleagues, children and families need a court that focuses exclusively on their welfare and their best interest. To realize this objective, the family court absolutely has to keep cases within its boundaries in order to be effective. This bill before us requires that the backlog of 4,500 cases have to be returned; and, second, that these cases which are currently under supervision of judges in the fam-

ily division, remain there even after the individual judges leave the family bench. But most importantly, it gives us the opportunity to recruit judges that want to deal in this area of the law, that want to work with these children and these families to give these children the kind of future they deserve.

This bill also requires that each year a report is prepared to Congress that includes the number of cases retained outside the family court. It is our intention that this number be very low, because one of the major purposes of this Act is to keep all the cases in the specialized family court. So under the D.C. appropriations bill, as the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) has said, there is \$24 million that has been appropriated to implement this legislation, to upgrade our computer systems, to expand its courtroom facilities and increase the number of judicial personnel to handle this huge backlog of cases.

The reforms required in this legislation combined with the money appropriated to support these reforms was designed with a single vital purpose, and that is to save the lives of abused and neglected children in the District of Columbia who are endangered by the status quo.

I am very proud to be associated with the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA), the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. TOM DAVIS), the delegation that serves the D.C. metroplex and, particularly, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) who has done an outstanding job in working all this out and bringing this bill to the floor. The children will appreciate it in the future. We have dedicated it to Brianna Blackmond.

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

Mr. Speaker, before I yield back the balance of my time, I would like to thank two staff members by name, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY), staff member Cassie Bevan, and my own staff member, John Bouker, because in a very real sense, when Members are as deeply involved as the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY) and I have been in this bill, the services of very high qualified, very smart staff people need to be involved, particularly given the many technical areas that were involved in this bill and the points of disagreement we had.

I want to, once again, say that I do not need to tell this House that the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY) is a tough negotiator. And yet, throughout these negotiations, they were over a year, we never came to a point where we did not think there would be a bill. And this was largely because the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY), although the District is not his district, felt so deeply about the children that he was willing to put personal time into this bill. That is difficult to do if you are a leader of the House. And I want to express my appreciation to the

gentleman again for his personal involvement in this bill, and for never letting go of this bill. Although, I will say on this floor that there were times I wish he would have let go of this bill. But that is what a bipartisan bill is about. It is about working together, instead of turning over the tables, until we can get a bill we can agree upon.

The gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY) and I probably have parts of this bill that we would like to have seen done just a little differently. But in the name of the children who will profit, who will benefit from what this bill provides, in the name of the many families in the District of Columbia for whom this bill will mean something very real in their lives, he and I reached a resolution of any differences we had.

We are both very proud of this bill.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, you can see this has been a collaborative effort that is going to help the children in the District of Columbia and be a model, I think, for the rest of the Nation. Anything good does not happen that easily. And so this is an example of something that has come from a lot of hard work.

Again, I commend the gentleman from Texas (Mr. Delay) for his leadership in making sure that this bill was negotiated throughout to come to this point, and also to the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. Norton) for the work, her tenaciousness in having this bill again crafted and reach this point. The gentleman from Virginia (Mr. Davis) has always been involved with it, and I am certainly pleased that we have reached this point.

I want to thank the staff also, John Bouker. Certainly Cassie Statuto Bevan has been there every inch of the way. My staff, Russell Smith and Haea Vazirani-Fales and the others who worked on it.

Mr. Speaker, I identify myself with the idea that when you touch a rock, you touch the past; and when you touch a flower, you touch the present; but when you touch a child, you touch the future. And that is just what this bill does. So I urge all our colleagues to wholeheartedly endorse the bill.

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2657, the District of Columbia Family Court Act of 2001, as amended. This is an important bill that will provide the Family Court with the structural and management reforms it needs to efficiently and effectively serve the children in the District's child welfare system.

After the tragic death of 23-month-old Brianna Blackmond, the D.C. Subcommittee held two hearings last year, which revealed the dire need for reforms to the various components of the District's child welfare system, including the Family Court. The recent series of articles in the Washington Post highlight long-term systemic problems in the child welfare system, and reemphasize the need for Court reform.

The Family Court must be equipped with the strategic tools and resource to assure the safety and well-being of the city's most vulnerable children. H.R. 2657 accomplishes this objective. It mandates longer judicial terms of service to ensure greater continuity in the handling of cases. New appointees to the Superior Court who are assigned to the Family Court will serve for 5 years. The bill also requires that judges appointed to serve on the Family Court have committed themselves to the practice of family law. Furthermore, it creates magistrate judges, who will be responsible for handling the backlog of 4,500 cases.

The bill imposes the critically important "one family, one judge" requirement on the Family Court to ensure that a judge is familiar with a family's history in order to make appropriate decisions regarding the safety and placement of the child.

The Court will create its own integrated computer system for use by judges, magistrate judges, and nonjudicial personnel, allowing them access to all pending cases related to children and their families. The bill also provides the judges and magistrate judges with access to information regarding the myriad social services available in D.C.

In addition to these key provisions, I support the Senate amendments. These include a provision requiring that when judges leave the Family Court, all of their cases remain in the Family Court. However, the bill does allow the judges an additional 6 months, and under extraordinary circumstances and additional 12 months, to retain a case if they can demonstrate to the Chief Judge that removing the child's case from the Family Court will result in more expeditious permanent placement. Let me emphasize that the application of this provision is only intended in rare situations.

The critical reforms in this legislation will help ensure that the Family Court can meet the needs of the city's children. I urge all of my colleagues to support H.R. 2657, as amended.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ISAKSON). The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA) that the House suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendment to the bill, H.R. 2657.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

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

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2506, FOREIGN OPERATIONS, EXPORT FINANCING, AND RELATED PROGRAMS APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2002

Mr. KOLBE (during consideration of H.R. 2657) submitted the following conference report and statement on the bill (H.R. 2506) making appropriations for foreign operations, export financing, and related programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2002, and for other purposes", having met, after full and free conference, have agreed to recommend and do recommend to their respective Houses as follows:

That the House recede from its disagreement to the amendment of the Senate, and agree to the same with an amendment, as follows:

In lieu of the matter stricken and inserted by said amendment, insert:

That the following sums are appropriated, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2002, and for other purposes, namely:

TITLE I—EXPORT AND INVESTMENT ASSISTANCE

EXPORT-IMPORT BANK OF THE UNITED STATES

The Export-Import Bank of the United States is authorized to make such expenditures within the limits of funds and borrowing authority available to such corporation, and in accordance with law, and to make such contracts and commitments without regard to fiscal year limitations, as provided by section 104 of the Government Corporation Control Act, as may be necessary in carrying out the program for the current fiscal year for such corporation: Provided, That none of the funds available during the current fiscal year may be used to make expenditures, contracts, or commitments for the export of nuclear equipment, fuel, or technology to any country, other than a nuclear-weapon state as defined in Article IX of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons eligible to receive economic or military assistance under this Act, that has detonated a nuclear explosive after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SUBSIDY APPROPRIATION

For the cost of direct loans, loan guarantees, insurance, and tied-aid grants as authorized by section 10 of the Export-Import Bank Act of 1945, as amended, \$727,323,000 to remain available until September 30, 2005: Provided, That such costs, including the cost of modifying such loans, shall be as defined in section 502 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974: Provided further, That such sums shall remain available until September 30, 2020 for the disbursement of direct loans, loan guarantees, insurance and tied-aid grants obligated in fiscal years 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005: Provided further, That none of the funds appropriated by this Act or any prior Act appropriating funds for foreign operations, export financing, or related programs for tied-aid credits or grants may be used for any other purpose except through the regular notification procedures of the Committees on Appropriations: Provided further, That funds appropriated by this paragraph are made available notwithstanding section 2(b)(2) of the Export Import Bank Act of 1945, in connection with the purchase or lease of any product by any East European country, any Baltic State or any agency or national thereof.

ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES

For administrative expenses to carry out the direct and guaranteed loan and insurance programs, including hire of passenger motor vehicles and services as authorized by 5 U.S.C. 3109, and not to exceed \$30,000 for official reception and representation expenses for members of the Board of Directors, \$63,000,000: Provided, That necessary expenses (including special services performed on a contract or fee basis, but not including other personal services) in connection with the collection of moneys owed the Export-Import Bank, repossession or sale of pledged collateral or other assets acquired by the Export-Import Bank in satisfaction of moneys owed the Export-Import Bank, or the investigation or appraisal of any property, or the evaluation of the legal or technical aspects of any transaction for which an application for a loan, guarantee or insurance commitment has been made, shall be considered nonadministrative expenses for the purposes of this heading: Provided further, That, notwithstanding subsection (b) of section 117 of the Export Enhancement Act of 1992, subsection (a) thereof shall remain in effect until October 1, 2002.

OVERSEAS PRIVATE INVESTMENT CORPORATION

NONCREDIT ACCOUNT

The Overseas Private Investment Corporation is authorized to make, without regard to fiscal year limitations, as provided by 31 U.S.C. 9104, such expenditures and commitments within the limits of funds available to it and in accordance with law as may be necessary: Provided, That the amount available for administrative expenses to carry out the credit and insurance programs (including an amount for official reception and representation expenses which shall not exceed \$35,000) shall not exceed \$38,608,000: Provided further, That project-specific transaction costs, including direct and indirect costs incurred in claims settlements, and other direct costs associated with services provided to specific investors or potential investors pursuant to section 234 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, shall not be considered administrative expenses for the purposes of this heading.

PROGRAM ACCOUNT

Such sums as may be necessary for administrative expenses to carry out the credit program may be derived from amounts available for administrative expenses to carry out the credit and insurance programs in the Overseas Private Investment Corporation Noncredit Account and merged with said account.

FUNDS APPROPRIATED TO THE PRESIDENT

TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

For necessary expenses to carry out the provisions of section 661 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, \$50,024,000, to remain available until September 30, 2003.

TITLE II—BILATERAL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE

FUNDS APPROPRIATED TO THE PRESIDENT

For expenses necessary to enable the President to carry out the provisions of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, and for other purposes, to remain available until September 30, 2002, unless otherwise specified herein, as follows:

UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

CHILD SURVIVAL AND HEALTH PROGRAMS FUND

For necessary expenses to carry out the provisions of chapters 1 and 10 of part I of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, and title I of Public Law 106-570, for child survival, reproductive health/family planning, assistance to combat tropical and other infectious diseases, and related activities, in addition to funds otherwise available for such purposes, \$1,433,500,000, to remain available until expended: Provided, That this amount shall be made available for such activities as: (1) immunization programs; (2) oral rehydration programs; (3) health, nutrition, water and sanitation programs which directly