

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

□ 1545

I certainly appreciate all the expressions of support for this bill. As my colleagues may know, this bill and the previous one are a product of a number of years of work.

But let me reemphasize a few points. For those who think that we are already doing a sufficiently good job on K-12 math and science, I encourage a visit to graduate schools in this Nation. In virtually every graduate school in science and engineering, we find that over half of the students are from other nations. Our students cannot compete against students from other nations in applying for admission to graduate school.

If more evidence is needed, just look at the actions of this Congress itself. This year we have approved 200,000 H-1B visas. Why? Because we do not have enough scientists, engineers, technicians, and mathematicians in this country to do the work that we need done to invent, develop, and produce the products that we are making in this country.

I could give other reasons why we have problems here. Let us face it, some of the problems are cultural. That is why the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) introduced her bill trying to encourage young girls to go into science, technology, and engineering because there is a culture in this country that women cannot do math or women cannot do science. It is utter nonsense. We are throwing away approximately 40 percent of our potential scientific, engineering, and mathematics workforce with that cultural attitude, that women are not good at science or math or that minorities do not care for science or math. That is nonsense, because in other countries they do; and they become scientists, engineers, doctors, and mathematicians. Women and minorities in this country can do the same.

We have to work hard to change that culture, and this bill will move us in that direction.

Science is fun if it is understood. Science is exciting when taught properly. And we have to make certain that the students of America enjoy that experience and realize that science is fun.

But the cultural issue is still an important one. As a physicist I have often had the experience when I met someone, before I came to the Congress, and they would ask what I do. I would say I am a physicist, and quite often I would get the response, "Oh, I could never understand all those numbers and symbols; I just could not get math or science." For a number of years, I accepted that statement. But then I began to think that was strange. What

if I had asked them the question first, what do you do, and they said, "Well, I am an English teacher," and I said, "Oh, I cannot understand all those letters and words, and so I gave up reading." That is socially unacceptable. But by the same standard, it should also be socially unacceptable to publicly profess ignorance of science and math.

Everyone is capable of learning some science and math. Everyone should learn it. I think it is extremely important in today's society that people not only understand the writings of Shakespeare and read them, but they should also understand the third law of dynamics; not as a physicist does, I do not expect that, but they should certainly understand what the three laws of thermodynamics mean and why we have an energy crisis today because we have, as a public, failed to understand the implications of the three laws of thermodynamics. Concepts such as this are important, and people should be aware of them and understand the implications of them.

These are all purposes of this bill and also of the bill of the gentleman from New York (Mr. BOEHLERT). I am hopeful that these bills will pass into law and that together they will go far to improve the competence of the scientists, engineers, mathematicians, and the lay people of this country so that we will no longer have a shortage of people to work in the technical, scientific industries, that we will train good teachers, and that we will have schools and students that we can be very proud of.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MILLER of Florida). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 100, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PROVIDING FOR RETENTION OF TRAVEL PROMOTIONAL ITEMS FOR FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2456) to provide that Federal employees may retain for personal use promotional items received as a result of travel taken in the course of employment.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 2456

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

SECTION 1. RETENTION OF TRAVEL PROMOTIONAL ITEMS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 5702 of title 5, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsection (c) as subsection (d);

(2) in subsection (d) (as redesignated by paragraph (1)), by striking "This section does" and inserting "Subsections (a) and (b) do"; and

(3) by inserting after subsection (b) the following new subsection:

"(c) Promotional items (including frequent flyer miles, upgrades, and access to carrier clubs or facilities) an employee receives as a result of using travel or transportation services procured by the United States or accepted pursuant to section 1353 of title 31 may be retained by the employee for personal use if such promotional items are obtained under the same terms as those offered to the general public and at no additional cost to the Government."

(b) REPEAL OF SUPERCEDED LAW.—Section 6008 of the Federal Acquisition Streamlining Act of 1994 (Public Law 103-355; 5 U.S.C. 5702 note) is repealed.

(c) APPLICABILITY.—The amendments made by this Act shall apply with respect to promotional items received before, on, or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. TURNER) 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 H.R. 2456, the bill 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, lately we have been hearing many reports about the human capital crisis affecting our civil service. Many of our best Federal employees are leaving for the private sector, with better pay and better benefits that are available to them. In addition, many talented individuals are choosing jobs in the private sector over public sector work for the same reasons.

While it is difficult for the Federal Government to match salaries with the private sector, it can at least demonstrate to current and prospective Federal employees that it values their service and is willing to reward them with certain benefits; and for this reason I hope the House will pass today H.R. 2456.

This important legislation that I am proud to cosponsor allows Federal civilian employees to keep frequent flyer miles and other promotional benefits that they receive while traveling on official government business. Unlike private sector employees, current law prohibits Federal employees from keeping

these benefits for personal use. In order for Federal employees to keep these frequent flyer benefits, the bill requires that they be obtained under the same terms as provided to the general public and must be at no additional cost to the government.

Many employees' work travel can interfere with their personal lives. This legislation is a great way to thank them for their service. In a recent GAO report that looked into the efficacy of allowing Federal employees to keep their frequent flyer miles, the GAO, that is the General Accounting Office, concluded that "changing the frequent flyer policy, and changing it retroactively, so that employees can take advantage of the unused miles, would boost Federal employees' morale and strengthen the Federal Government's ability to compete with the private sector. We, therefore, believe Congress should consider allowing Federal employees to keep and make personal use of the frequent flyer miles."

I could not agree more. Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of this bill.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA) for her leadership on this issue. I think it is very important that we level the playing field between the way Federal Government employees are treated and employees in the private sector are treated with regard to frequent flyer miles and other such benefits.

As we all know, we are having a more difficult time than ever attracting quality individuals into the Federal workforce, and we know that there are many very hard working Federal employees who deserve to be treated in the public sector the same as they would be treated if they were in the private sector. So this bill today is, I think, a significant step toward improving the morale of our government employees and allowing them to know that the Federal Government, as an employer, will treat them in a similar manner to those employees in the private sector.

I know that the gentlewoman from Maryland has taken a very strong interest in this bill. She has many Federal employees within her district, and I know that she has studied this issue very carefully. It is very true, I think, that the use of these frequent flyer miles by our Federal agencies is sporadic at best. Many times they go unused. It seems to be certainly an appropriate benefit of employment to allow our Federal employees, many of whom get up early in the morning to make a flight to take care of Federal business, sometimes getting home late at night after a workday in some far off place. Those who make those sacrifices, who are away from their families, it seems to me it is entirely appropriate they receive some benefit for those extra

hours that many of them spend on an airplane beyond the usual 8 hours and 40 hours that they work in a day or a week.

So I again commend the gentlewoman from Maryland for her leadership on this issue and certainly urge all the Members of the House to join in supporting H.R. 2456.

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

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume to thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. TURNER) for his steadfast and committed work in the Committee on Government Reform, and thank him for the statement he made in support of this bill, which I think will be very helpful.

Mr. Speaker, as has been mentioned, very often when Federal employees are traveling, they are sacrificing the valuable time that they would spend with their family. By allowing them at least to use these frequent flyer miles when they are on government service, they could perhaps take their family, cumulatively with these miles, on a trip.

As I had mentioned earlier, the legislation has the support of the General Accounting Office, it has the support of the administration. I hope that we can put this legislation on President Bush's desk this year and show our Federal employees that we value their service.

I want to thank the Chairman of the Committee on Government Reform, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON), and the ranking member, the gentleman from California (Mr. WAXMAN), for bringing this legislation to the floor, and all of the cosponsors.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 2456 would allow Federal employees to keep frequent flyer miles they earn from official travel. This bill was approved unanimously by the Government Reform Committee last week. It will help Federal agencies compete with the private sector for hard-to-retain employees.

In 1994, we passed a law that said that Federal employees can't keep frequent flyer miles. The idea was to save money. We wanted Federal agencies to use these miles for official business. Unfortunately, it didn't work. Frequent flyer miles are going to waste at agencies across the government.

The problem is that, according to the airlines, frequent flyer miles can only be awarded to individuals. The airlines won't set up separate business accounts and personal accounts. So in most cases, the frequent flyer miles are being wasted. They're not being used by Federal agencies, and in most cases, they're not being used by Federal workers. This situation isn't benefiting anyone.

In the private sector, businesses let their employees keep frequent flyer miles. It's good employee relations. Business travel can be draining. Employees often have to travel on their own time. Letting employees keep their frequent flyer miles compensates them for lost time they could be spending with their families. It also helps companies hold on to their good employees. That's the approach the Federal government ought to take.

In a review done for the Committee, the General Accounting Office expressed their

strong support for this legislation. According to the GAO, passage of this bill would boost employee morale and help the government attract and retain top-quality employees. The Bush Administration has also fully endorsed this legislation.

I would like to thank Congresswoman CONNIE MORELLA, an original cosponsor of the bill, for her hard work on this important legislation. I urge my colleagues to support it.

U.S. CONGRESS,
CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE,
Washington, DC, July 27, 2001.

Hon. DAN BURTON,
Chairman, Committee on Government Reform,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The Congressional Budget Office has prepared the enclosed cost estimate for H.R. 2456, a bill to provide that federal employees may retain for personal use promotional items received as a result of travel taken in the course of employment.

If you wish further details on this estimate, we will be pleased to provide them. The CBO staff contact is Mark Grabowicz, who can be reached at 226-2860.

Sincerely,

BARRY B. ANDERSON
(For DAN L. CRIPPEN, Director).

Enclosure.

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST
ESTIMATE

H.R. 2456—A bill to provide that federal employees may retain for personal use promotional items received as a result of travel taken in the course of employment; As ordered reported by the House Committee on Government Reform on July 25, 2001.

H.R. 2456 would allow most civilian federal employees to use frequent flyer miles and other travel benefits that they earn through official travel for their own personal travel. Current law permits most federal employees to utilize such frequent travel programs only for official business. Because airlines award such benefits to the individual traveler rather than to the government however, the benefits of frequent travel programs are rarely applied to official trips and have little effect on federal travel costs, according to a recent report by the General Accounting Office. Thus, CBO estimates that implementing H.R. 2456 would have no significant impact on the federal budget.

H.R. 2456 would not affect direct spending or receipts, so pay-as-you-go procedures would not apply. The bill contains no inter-governmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would not affect the budgets of state, local, or tribal governments.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Mark Grabowicz, who can be reached at 226-2860. This estimate was approved by Peter H. Fontaine, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, I have no other requests for time, I urge adoption of this measure, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and 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 bill, H.R. 2456.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.