

AMBER Alert by including our bill in this child protection package, but frankly, I would have preferred it if our bill had been brought up for a vote in the form that has already passed the Senate. That bill would go straight to the President's desk and we could immediately begin setting up a national AMBER network.

I am pleased to vote to pass this bill today, but this is a large package with some controversial provisions that may not pass the Senate this year. If the Senate does not act on this larger bill, I will implore the House Republican leadership not to play politics on this issue and request that we vote on the National AMBER Alert Network Act that has already passed that Chamber.

The AMBER Alert has proven its effectiveness and every child deserves its protections. There is no excuse for not passing a national AMBER Alert network into law this year.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 5422, the Child Abduction Prevention Act. I am pleased to be an original cosponsor of the AMBER Alert legislation contained in this bill. As we witnessed this past summer, Amber Plans have worked to bring children home safely. An AMBER Alert was sent out to a number of States to search for 10-year old Nicole Timmons of Riverside, California. The alert was not only delivered throughout California but also in neighboring States, and Nicole was found in Nevada. What if Nicole's abductor went to an area that wasn't covered by the AMBER Alert System?

Currently, there is no national coordination. In fact, only 18 states have statewide plans and when an AMBER Alert is activated, all areas of the country are not covered. Instead, the alert is targeted more locally, regionally, or statewide. With the recent expansion of the AMBER Alert Program, a system is needed to ensure that neighboring states and communities will be able to honor each other's alerts when an abductor is traveling with the child to other parts of the country. This bill helps coordinate AMBER Alerts nationally. We need a coordinated nation-wide effort so that abducted children transported across state lines do not fall through the cracks. Speed is essential when trying to rescue an abducted child. Seventy-four percent of children who are murdered by their abductors are killed within 3 hours of being taken. That's why it is imperative that law enforcement and the media react quickly and get the word back to the community.

The AMBER Alert Plan does just that by sending an emergency alert to the public when a child has been abducted. Several high profile child abductions and recoveries have recently demonstrated how successful the AMBER Alert Plan can be—to date, the AMBER Alert has been credited with recovering about 30 children.

In addition, the bill would provide grants on a 50–50 matching basis to update provide training and technology to law enforcement, and for the purpose of disseminating alerts. The Senate has passed similar legislation and President George Bush has also announced his strong support for a national AMBER Alert Network. I urge Congress to pass this important bill quickly so that the AMBER Alert System will be there for all of our Nation's children.

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

□ 1500

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CANTOR). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5422, as amended.

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. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA AND UNITED STATES TERRITORIES CIRCULATING QUARTER DOLLAR PROGRAM ACT

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4005) to provide for a circulating quarter dollar coin program to commemorate the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the United States Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 4005

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "District of Columbia and United States Territories Circulating Quarter Dollar Program Act".

SEC. 2. ISSUANCE OF REDESIGNED QUARTER DOLLARS COMMEMORATING THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA AND EACH OF THE TERRITORIES.

Section 5112 of title 31, United States Code, is amended by inserting after subsection (m) the following new subsection:

"(n) REDESIGN AND ISSUANCE OF CIRCULATING QUARTER DOLLAR COMMEMORATING THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA AND EACH OF THE TERRITORIES.—

"(1) REDESIGN IN 2009.—

"(A) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding the fourth sentence of subsection (d)(1) and subsection (d)(2) and subject to paragraph (6)(B), quarter dollar coins issued during 2009, shall have designs on the reverse side selected in accordance with this subsection which are emblematic of the District of Columbia and the territories.

"(B) FLEXIBILITY WITH REGARD TO PLACEMENT OF INSCRIPTIONS.—Notwithstanding subsection (d)(1), the Secretary may select a design for quarter dollars issued during 2009 in which—

(i) the inscription described in the second sentence of subsection (d)(1) appears on the reverse side of any such quarter dollars; and

(ii) any inscription described in the third sentence of subsection (d)(1) or the designation of the value of the coin appears on the obverse side of any such quarter dollars.

"(2) SINGLE DISTRICT OR TERRITORY DESIGN.—The design on the reverse side of each quarter dollar issued during 2009 shall be emblematic of one of the following: The District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto

Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the United States Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

"(3) SELECTION OF DESIGN.—

"(A) IN GENERAL.—Each of the 6 designs required under this subsection for quarter dollars shall be selected by the Secretary after consultation with—

"(i) the chief executive of the District of Columbia or the territory being commemorated, or such other officials or group as the chief executive officer of the District of Columbia or the territory may designate for such purpose; and

"(ii) the Commission of Fine Arts.

"(B) SELECTION AND APPROVAL PROCESS.—

Designs for quarter dollars may be submitted in accordance with the design selection and approval process developed by the Secretary in the sole discretion of the Secretary.

"(C) PARTICIPATION.—The Secretary may include participation by District or territorial officials, artists from the District of Columbia or the territory, engravers of the United States Mint, and members of the general public.

"(D) STANDARDS.—Because it is important that the Nation's coinage and currency bear dignified designs of which the citizens of the United States can be proud, the Secretary shall not select any frivolous or inappropriate design for any quarter dollar minted under this subsection.

"(E) PROHIBITION ON CERTAIN REPRESENTATIONS.—No head and shoulders portrait or bust of any person, living or dead, and no portrait of a living person may be included in the design of any quarter dollar under this subsection.

"(4) TREATMENT AS NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purposes of sections 5134 and 5136, all coins minted under this subsection shall be considered to be numismatic items.

"(5) ISSUANCE.—

"(A) QUALITY OF COINS.—The Secretary may mint and issue such number of quarter dollars of each design selected under paragraph (4) in uncirculated and proof qualities as the Secretary determines to be appropriate.

"(B) SILVER COINS.—Notwithstanding subsection (b), the Secretary may mint and issue such number of quarter dollars of each design selected under paragraph (4) as the Secretary determines to be appropriate, with a content of 90 percent silver and 10 percent copper.

"(C) SOURCES OF BULLION.—The Secretary shall obtain silver for minting coins under subparagraph (B) from available resources, including stockpiles established under the Strategic and Critical Materials Stock Piling Act.

"(D) TIMING AND ORDER OF ISSUANCE.—Coins minted under this subsection commemorating the District of Columbia and each of the territories shall be issued in equal sequential intervals during 2009 in the following order: the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the United States Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

"(6) OTHER PROVISIONS.—

"(A) APPLICATION IN EVENT OF ADMISSION AS A STATE.—If the District of Columbia or any territory becomes a State before the end of the 10-year period referred to in subsection (1)(1), subsection (1)(7) shall apply, and this subsection shall not apply, with respect to such State.

"(B) APPLICATION IN EVENT OF INDEPENDENCE.—If any territory becomes independent or otherwise ceases to be a territory or possession of the United States before quarter dollars bearing designs which are emblematic of such territory are minted pursuant to

this subsection, this subsection shall cease to apply with respect to such territory.

“(7) TERRITORY DEFINED.—For purposes of this subsection, the term ‘territory’ means the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the United States Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE) and the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and to insert extraneous material on H.R. 4005.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4005, the District of Columbia and United States Territories Circulating Quarter Dollar Program Act sponsored by the gentleman from New York (Mr. KING).

As Members are aware, the 50-State quarter program that began in 1999 has been a truly successful effort. I had the privilege of serving as the Chairman of the then-Domestic and International Monetary Policy Subcommittee at the time the 50-State Quarter bill was signed into law. The program calls for the production over 10 years of quarter dollar coins with the reverse, or back, of the coins depicting scenes representing each of the 50 States. Five are produced each year.

That program has been wildly successful. It is not uncommon for people to stop and examine the change in their pocket before making a transaction, perhaps saving a new quarter out of a pocketful. The result has been as much as a five-fold increase in the demand for quarters. But the bottom line is that every time someone looks at the back of a quarter, they learn something about the State represented.

At the time the bill was moving through Congress, not everyone was convinced that it would be a great success. This skepticism kept us from including the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the territories in the program. Because the program has been a wild success, it is appropriate for us to create a sister program for the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the territories.

The District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the territories are not States, but they are certainly part of the United States' history. In the case of the territories, particularly, I know we could all stand to learn a little more about them. Therefore, I think it is self-evident that this program is a good

idea. It creates an entirely separate program from the State quarters program, so there is no confusion that inclusion somehow confers statehood.

The gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) may have different thoughts about that, but that is the way it had to be done. The program would run for 1 year when the other program finished, issuing all six quarters in that year, 2009. And if the history of the State quarters program is any guide, the D.C. and territories' quarters taken out of circulation permanently by collectors would total as much as \$1 billion which would accrue to the U.S. Treasury in the form of money deposited into the general fund.

Mr. Speaker, this is a good program. It is identical to H.R. 5010, sponsored in the 106th Congress by the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BACHUS) and passed by the House 377-6 after a convincing hearing in the Committee on Banking and Finance. It is educational, and it would raise a little money for the general fund as well. It deserves the support of all Members. I urge its immediate passage.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I cannot help but to appreciate the remark of the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE) about the requirement that it be understood that this bill not confer statehood. All I can say to the gentleman is that I have heard of back-door legislation, but I am sure this House knows how to keep the district from becoming a State through the back door. Nevertheless, I certainly appreciate all of the consideration that has been given to the District for a coin, a bill that matters a great deal to the people I represent.

Mr. Speaker, today I rise in strong support of H.R. 4005, the District of Columbia and United States Territories Circulating Quarter Dollar Program Act, a bill that would give the District of Columbia and the territories a privilege the 50 States already have, namely the ability to choose a design for the reverse side of the quarter coin in order to commemorate our history as part of the United States.

Mr. Speaker, we have traveled a long road to get to this moment today with the generous assistance of each chair and ranking member of the committee and the subcommittee. The absence of the District of Columbia and the territories drew our attention when the original 50 States Commemorative Coin Program Act came to the House floor in the 105th Congress. I am grateful to the initiative of the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE), who has come to manage the bill and was then Chairman of the Subcommittee on Domestic and International Monetary Policy. The gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE) immediately agreed to cosponsor a bill with the other delegates and with me to allow the District and the four insular areas to participate in the program.

With the gentleman's support, I then introduced a bill to include the District and the territories. During the 106th Congress, I again introduced the bill; and the new chairman of the subcommittee, the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BACHUS), agreed to lend his support, sponsored the bill and took it to the House floor, where it passed overwhelmingly by a vote of 377-6 on September 18, 2000.

Unfortunately, because the bill was passed late in the session, the Senate did not act on the bill. That brings us to the current Congress and a new chairman of the subcommittee, the gentleman from New York (Mr. KING). I want to thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. KING), as I thank his predecessors, for introducing the bill and for his leadership in bringing the bill to the floor today.

Also, I want to thank the ranking member of the subcommittee, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY), for cosponsoring the bill and for her diligent work; and I thank the chairman and ranking member of the full committee, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. OXLEY) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. LAFALCE), for their great cooperation in helping us with this effort today. Without their leadership, this day would not have been possible.

Mr. Speaker, I want to reserve my particular gratitude for my colleagues, the delegates from the insular areas, who are all cosponsors of this bill and who have remained committed to this effort from the beginning.

I must also say a special word of thanks to the excellent staff who have worked so diligently on this bill, Joe Pinder of the majority staff and Jaime Lizarraga of the minority staff.

Although the residents of the District of Columbia and the insular areas are American citizens, there are some differences between us and the States. Qualification to be part of a program to redesign quarters to commemorate Members' home districts is not among them. There is no legal or constitutional reason why the District and the territories cannot be part of a popular commemorative coin program created to celebrate the components of our Federal republic to spark interest both in the history of this great Nation and in numismatics and to raise funds for the Treasury.

We recognize that Congress always desires to avoid any appearance of unfairness, and it is clear that the initial exclusion from the program was an oversight. With the passage of this bill, we will correct that oversight today.

H.R. 4005 would extend the 10-year commemorative coin program for an additional year to include the District of Columbia and the four insular areas, American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, as well as the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands, in the program.

In the District, I have suggested that we hold a competition to choose the design for our quarter. Of course, the bill

requires that "the Secretary shall not select any frivolous or inappropriate design for any quarter dollar minted." Although to some American citizens the Commemorative Coin Program may seem like a minor activity, the ability to participate in this program is important recognition to our constituents.

Despite the fact that in the normal process, it has taken 5 years to get to this point today, no damage has been done because the original Commemorative Coin Program mandates a 10-year period from minting commemorative quarters, according to the date of admission to the Union, and, therefore, the Treasury would not have reached the districts recognized in this bill at this point in any case.

We are very pleased by the success of the program. Nineteen States already have quarters, all of whom I am certain feel pride in having a coin to commemorate their particular characteristics, achievements or history as a part of our Nation.

We also are pleased that this program costs the Treasury nothing, but, instead, because of the popularity of the coins, actually brings in new money for the government, totaling billions of dollars. Our participation will mean even more funds will come to our government.

D.C. residents carry the flag and wave the flag. We are second per capita in Federal income taxes, and we serve in the Armed Forces in numbers disproportionately higher than the States. The District, for example, had more residents who served in the Gulf War than 47 States and more casualties in Vietnam than each of 10 States.

This coin bill, therefore, may not mean much to the average citizen, but it means a great deal to those of us who live in the District of Columbia. The commemorative quarter will be a matter of particular pride to the residents of the District. We are sensitive to find ways to indicate our unity with the 50 States.

I know I speak for all of the delegates when I say that, as American citizens, we would appreciate being acknowledged with a coin of our own. We seek only the maximum recognition permissible under law. H.R. 4005 will afford our residents a sense of particular pride as we join other Americans in commemorating our unique contributions to our shared history.

Mr. Speaker, I thank all of my colleagues, especially the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE) who initiated this effort, for their leadership on this bill and urge its passage.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, first, with respect to the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON), she has been working on this tirelessly from the beginning of it. In fact, as we were getting started, she came to see me and

started to talk to me about it. I saw the wisdom after a couple of visits and have heartily embraced it ever since. I am glad that it is going through the House again, and hopefully we can get it through the Senate.

While we are not exactly providing statehood, we are in no way hurting statehood. I think that statehood will be, if anything, enhanced by this, and not hurt by it.

I thank Joe Pinder of the Committee on Financial Services staff. He has worked long and hard on these issues. While it is nice to say this program has worked so well, there was a great deal of resistance to this program at a whole variety of levels, and it took a lot of studies and a lot of people having to be convinced before it could work.

I would like to say finally, on the economics, some people might wonder how this makes money. For the millions of people listening on C-SPAN, I would just point out that it costs about 4 cents to make a quarter. And when they are issued eventually by the Federal Reserve to the banks, they receive 25 cents for each quarter, so there is a 21-cent float. And as long as that float is out there, it is money that can be used by the Federal Government and is money on which the Federal Government does not have to pay interest. In that sense, that money is able to be used without having to borrow other money.

The reality of this program is that all these coins are being collected. So it is almost a permanent matter of 21-cent conversion, so, as a result, the Treasury has benefited and will continue to benefit. We talked about a billion dollars with these six new coins. That is probably a correct estimate over some period of time. That is the economics of this, in addition to the education aspects of it, and another reason why this has been a program which has been so greatly successful.

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

Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE) proved prescient in his understanding of how this bill would not only benefit this country's Treasury but individual States. In fact, he may well go down in history as the Member who almost effortlessly raised billions of dollars for the United States Treasury. All he had to do was, with the stroke of his pen, bring this bill to the floor, and money began to flow into the Treasury.

As for the people of the District of Columbia, and for the insular areas as well, I can say with deep sincerity never has a coin meant so much to so few, but that is what it means to us. We are very appreciative of the opportunity to be included in this bill.

□ 1515

Mr. Speaker, and with thanks to the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE) and to those who worked so hard, the chairman and past chairman and ranking members of this committee and subcommittee.

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

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the remainder of my time.

I thank the gentlewoman for her kind comments, and hopefully we can speed this through the Senate as well.

Mr. UNDERWOOD. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to commend the leadership of Representatives PETER KING and CAROLYN MALONEY for their instrumental work in moving this legislation out of the Subcommittee on Domestic Monetary Policy, Technology and Economic Growth and onto the floor today. I would also like to recognize the leadership of my colleagues Representative MIKE CASTLE and Delegates NORTON, FALEOMAVAEGA, CHRISTENSEN, and ACEVEDO-VILÁ, who have worked steadily to achieve the same recognition given to the 50 states when the Commemorative Coin Program Act was passed in 1997.

Though it has taken five years to recognize these U.S. jurisdictions, I am very pleased that the passage of this legislation would extend this program and acknowledge the participation of the District of Columbia and the U.S. territories of Guam, the Virgin Islands, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, American Samoa and Puerto Rico in the scope of our great nation. Like citizens of other states, Americans living in these jurisdictions have served in the armed forces, but in numbers disproportionately higher than in the states. Both the District and the territories have cultivated generations of scholars, athletes, entertainers, and artists, who have added to the rich history and diversity of this nation. It may not mean much for the average citizen to have a commemorative quarter, but it means a great deal to these jurisdictions.

Since 1998, the United States Treasury has issued five specially designed quarters to commemorate each state in order of their ratification of the Constitution and admission into the Union. To date, there are 19 state quarters in circulation, which signify particular characteristics, achievement, and history of each state.

It was hoped that the Commemorative Coin Program would lead the American public to appreciate the history of U.S. coinage and generate a collective pride among Americans, not only in their home states, but also the nation as a whole. It has always been my hope that Congress would not forget the history of these jurisdictions. I am proud to note that today we can realize the full and rich history of the District of Columbia, of my district of Guam, and the four other territories of the United States.

Not very many Americans know that my district of Guam, an island approximately 3,500 miles southwest of Hawaii, was also attacked on December 7, 1941, the date which marked the United States' entrance into World War II. From the time of the attack to the liberation of the island on July 21, 1944, Guam has the distinction of being the only civilian U.S. jurisdiction to be occupied by the Japanese during the war.

In 1998, Guam marked its 100th anniversary of the commencement of its relationship with the United States which resulted from the Spanish-American War. In 1999, we commemorated the 50th anniversary of the enactment of the Organic Act of Guam, which

granted civilian government and U.S. citizenship to the people of Guam. We are the westernmost territory of the United States on the opposite side of the International Date Line and have the distinction of being the place "where America's day begins." The passage of this legislation today will not only give acknowledgment to the unique circumstances and histories of these U.S. jurisdictions, it also pays tribute to Americans living in these places who take great pride and provide service to the nation but often feel marginalized or left behind because they are unable to take part in programs which most other Americans enjoy.

As an original co-sponsor of this legislation and of its predecessor, H.R. 5010, I urge my colleagues to unanimously support this very important legislation and urge its expeditious passage and enactment.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4005, a bill to provide for a circulating quarter dollar coin program to commemorate American Samoa, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and the Northern Mariana Islands.

In general, this legislation would amend the popular 50 States Commemorative Coin Program Act to include 6 new designs emblematic of the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and the Northern Mariana Islands. Designs on the reverse side of each quarter dollar issued during 2009 will be selected by the Secretary of Treasury in consultation with the chief executive officers of these areas.

It should come as no surprise that I am a strong supporter of this bill. My colleagues and I have worked for some time to move this legislation forward. All five delegates are and were original co-sponsors of this bi-partisan measure. This measure was first introduced in the 106th Congress and passed overwhelmingly in the House by a vote of 377-6. Unfortunately, the 106th Congress ended before the Senate was able to consider our bill.

I am now pleased that H.R. 4005 has once again made it to the House floor for consideration. I want to thank Congresswoman ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON for her leadership and I also want to thank the order Delegates who have also worked tirelessly to ensure that this legislation is considered.

Speaking on behalf of American Samoa, I believe it is only fitting for Congress to acknowledge our relationship with the United States with the issuance of a commemorative coin. American Samoa has a long and proud history of supporting the United States. The traditional leaders of the island of Tutuila ceded our islands to the United States in 1900.

Tutuila's harbor is the deepest in the South Pacific and the port village of Pago Pago was used as a coaling station for U.S. naval ships in the early part of the century and as a support base for U.S. soldiers during WWII. To this day, American Samoa serves as a refueling point for U.S. naval ships and military aircraft.

American Samoa also has a per capita enlistment rate in the U.S. military which is as high as any State or U.S. Territory. Our sons and daughters have served in record numbers in every U.S. military engagement from WWII to present operations in our war against terrorists. We have stood by the United States in good times and bad and I believe this relation-

ship should be acknowledged with the issuance of a commemorative coin.

H.R. 4005 afford us an opportunity to recognize the special contributions that the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Northern Marianas have made to the history of our Nation. I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this legislation.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CANTOR). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4005.

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.

ALLOWING CERTAIN CATCH-UP CONTRIBUTIONS TO THRIFT SAVINGS PLAN

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3340) to amend title 5, United States Code, to allow certain catch-up contributions to the Thrift Savings Plan to be made by participants age 50 or over, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 3340

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

SECTION 1. THRIFT SAVINGS PLAN CATCH-UP CONTRIBUTIONS.

(a) CIVIL SERVICE RETIREMENT SYSTEM.—Paragraph (2) of section 8351(b) of title 5, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(C) Notwithstanding any limitation under this paragraph, an eligible participant (as defined by section 414(v) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986) may make such additional contributions to the Thrift Savings Fund as are permitted by such section 414(v) and regulations of the Executive Director consistent therewith.”.

(b) FEDERAL EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM.—

(1) PROVISION APPLICABLE TO EMPLOYEES GENERALLY.—Subsection (a) of section 8432 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(3) Notwithstanding any limitation under this subsection, an eligible participant (as defined by section 414(v) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986) may make such additional contributions to the Thrift Savings Fund as are permitted by such section 414(v) and regulations of the Executive Director consistent therewith.”.

(2) PROVISION APPLICABLE TO CERTAIN OTHER INDIVIDUALS.—Section 8440f of title 5, United States Code, is amended—

(A) by striking “The maximum” and inserting “(a) The maximum”; and

(B) by adding at the end the following:

“(b) Notwithstanding any limitation under this section, an eligible participant (as defined by section 414(v) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986) may make such additional contributions to the Thrift Savings Fund as are permitted by such section 414(v) and regulations of the Executive Director consistent therewith.”.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect as of the earliest practicable date, as determined by the Executive Director (appointed under section 8474(a) of title 5, United States Code) in regulations.

SEC. 2. REAUTHORIZATION OF MERIT SYSTEM PROTECTION BOARD AND OFFICE OF SPECIAL COUNSEL.

(a) MERIT SYSTEMS PROTECTION BOARD.—Section 8(a)(1) of the Whistleblower Protection Act of 1989 (5 U.S.C. 5509 note) is amended by striking “1998, 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002” and inserting “2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, and 2007”.

(b) OFFICE OF SPECIAL COUNSEL.—Section 8(a)(2) of the Whistleblower Protection Act of 1989 (5 U.S.C. 5509 note) is amended by striking “1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, and 1997,” and inserting “2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, and 2007”.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This section shall be effective as of October 1, 2002.

SEC. 3. DISCLOSURE OF VIOLATIONS OF LAW; RETURN OF DOCUMENTS.

Section 1213(g) of title 5, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking the last sentence; and

(2) by striking paragraph (3) and inserting the following:

“(3) If the Special Counsel does not transmit the information to the head of the agency under paragraph (2), the Special Counsel shall inform the individual of—

“(A) the reasons why the disclosure may not be further acted on under this chapter; and

“(B) other offices available for receiving disclosures, should the individual wish to pursue the matter further.”.

SEC. 4. CONTINUATION OF HEALTH BENEFITS COVERAGE FOR INDIVIDUALS ENROLLED IN A PLAN ADMINISTERED BY THE OVERSEAS PRIVATE INVESTMENT CORPORATION.

(a) ENROLLMENT IN CHAPTER 89 PLAN.—For purposes of the administration of chapter 89 of title 5, United States Code, any period of enrollment under a health benefits plan administered by the Overseas Private Investment Corporation before the effective date of this Act shall be deemed to be a period of enrollment in a health benefits plan under chapter 89 of such title.

(b) CONTINUED COVERAGE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Any individual who, as of the enrollment eligibility date, is covered by a health benefits plan administered by the Overseas Private Investment Corporation may enroll in an approved health benefits plan described under section 8903 or 8903a of title 5, United States Code—

(A) either as an individual or for self and family, if such individual is an employee, annuitant, or former spouse as defined under section 8901 of such title; and

(B) for coverage effective on and after such date.

(2) INDIVIDUALS CURRENTLY UNDER CONTINUED COVERAGE.—An individual who, as of the enrollment eligibility date, is entitled to continued coverage under a health benefits plan administered by the Overseas Private Investment Corporation—

(A) shall be deemed to be entitled to continued coverage under section 8905a of title 5, United States Code, for the same period that would have been permitted under the plan administered by the Overseas Private Investment Corporation; and

(B) may enroll in an approved health benefits plan described under section 8903 or 8903a of such title in accordance with section 8905a of such title for coverage effective on and after such date.

(3) UNMARRIED DEPENDENT CHILDREN.—An individual who, as of the enrollment eligibility date, is covered as an unmarried dependent child under a health benefits plan