

The program offers employers the opportunity to ensure that individuals they hire are eligible to work in the United States.

Illegal immigrants drive down wages and take jobs from American workers. Recent studies show immigration has depressed the wages of American workers in similar jobs by more than \$2,500 per year. Ninety percent of the American people believe that we should reduce illegal immigration, and 79 percent feel that the Federal Government should require employers to verify the work status of potential employees. The main attraction for the 10 to 20 million illegal aliens who have crossed our borders is work. If we want to reduce the incentive for illegal immigration and its negative impacts, we must reduce the availability of jobs for illegal immigrants.

This program reduces illegal immigration because it allows employers to make sure they are only hiring someone who is eligible to work in the United States.

Everyone who is concerned about lost jobs and unemployment should support the expansion of the basic pilot program. If we are serious about saving jobs for citizens and legal immigrants, we should pass S. 1685.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

First of all, let me again acknowledge my colleagues on the Subcommittee on Immigration, Border Security, and Claims and the full Committee on the Judiciary; but I always want to acknowledge the staff, both majority and minority, for working through this legislation.

I would simply say that we have realized that we have this dilemma between the need for American workers to have jobs, particularly in this economy, and juxtaposing it against the numbers of immigrants who have come to this country for opportunity, in many instances economic opportunity. I hope that, as we look at this legislation, we will be reminded of the fact that we do need to establish a real immigration policy for this Nation.

The basic pilot legislation helps us to avoid what I think is the ugliest part of this conflict with illegal immigration, and that is racial stereotyping and stigmatizing of those who happen to come from a background that would ordinarily suggest that they are not here with legal status. By being able to find out real information through the BCIS and the Social Security Administration, employers can be safe and secure in those that they might hire.

At the same time I think that this body owes it to the establishment of a real immigration policy along with the administration that we should pass 245(i) and begin to look at ways to address the question of 8 million undocumented aliens by earning access to legalization, by passing legislation that allows those who have come here to work to earn their way to citizenship

first by way of being in this country for 5 years without a criminal background, paying taxes, and working, finding a way for them to route themselves to real citizenship.

Might I say in conclusion that as we organize a Homeland Security Department, and the Committee on the Judiciary worked very hard to establish aspects of the immigration provisions, to the credit of the Committee on the Judiciary, that particular section was called the Bureau of Citizenship, I believe, and Immigration Services. That is an important step, that we want people to be able to legally access citizenship, those who have come here to work and come here to do what is good for this country to be able to access citizenship even if their first entry might have been in an illegal status.

This legislation clearly is needed today, but we do need a forceful immigration policy. With that I ask my colleagues to vote for this legislation.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, the only way we are going to get a handle on the illegal immigration problem of this country is by giving employers the means to verify whether an applicant for employment is legally able to work here and then to enforce the 1986 law which makes it illegal for an employer to hire an illegal alien. If we do not do both, then it will be always cheaper for an employer to break the law by hiring an illegal alien because they do not have to pay them the minimum wage, they do not have to have workplace safety and environmental standards. In many cases they are paid in cash; and the deductions for Social Security and Federal and State income tax withholding are not taken out, all of which is illegal, but there still is a huge economic incentive for an employer to break the law multiple times by hiring an illegal alien.

This bill is an important part of closing a part of that loop, by giving employers nationwide the tools to find out if the person who is asking for a job is legal and a better way of being able to determine whether the documents that the applicant presents are genuine documents or counterfeit documents.

So we have done a part of making our immigration laws more effective by passing this legislation, but the other part indeed deals with enforcement because without enforcement of the immigration law, the problem that we thought we solved with the amnesty that was granted in 1986 will continue whether or not there is another amnesty that is granted by the Congress, which is a move that I personally oppose. So with that, I urge the Members to support this bill.

Mr. OSBORNE. Mr. Speaker, as an original cosponsor of similar House legislation, I encourage my colleagues to support S. 1685,

the Basic Pilot Extension Act of 2003. This important legislation would extend for five years the Basic Pilot Verification Program, which is a voluntary program that employers use in conjunction with the Bureau of Immigration and Citizenship Services (BCIS) and the Social Security Administration (SSA) to confirm employment eligibility in my home state of Nebraska, among others. This pilot, which started in November 1997, involves verification checks of the SSA and the BCIS databases of all newly hired employees regardless of citizenship. Unfortunately, the Basic Pilot program is scheduled to terminate on November 30th of this year.

The agricultural economy of Nebraska's Third District relies heavily on immigrant labor. Employers across my district have told me that they want to comply with the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, which made it unlawful for employers to knowingly hire or employ aliens not eligible to work, and required employers to verify documents of new workers. However, a simple visual check of these documents by employers will not tell them if these are in fact counterfeit documents, and that this potential new hire is in fact an illegal alien.

I have heard from many business people in the Third District about their need for the Basic Pilot program. Employers need the appropriate tools to ensure that they are indeed hiring eligible workers, and S. 1685 would allow employers in all states to opt to participate in the program. By checking the new hire's documents against the BCIS and SSA databases, the Basic Pilot program allows employers to feel more confident about their new hire.

I thank my colleague, Representative CALVERT, for his hard work on this issue in the House and I urge my colleagues to support S. 1685.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SWEENEY). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill, S. 1685.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PROVIDING FOR FEDERAL COURT PROCEEDINGS IN PLANO, TEXAS

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill (S. 1720) to provide for Federal court proceedings in Plano, Texas.

The Clerk read as follows:

S. 1720

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

SECTION 1. CHANGE IN COMPOSITION OF DIVISIONS OF EASTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 124(c) of title 28, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (3)—

(A) by striking "Denton, and Grayson" and inserting "Delta, Denton, Fannin, Grayson, Hopkins, and Lamar"; and

(B) by inserting "and Plano" after "held at Sherman";

(2) by striking paragraph (4) and redesignating paragraphs (5) through (7) as paragraphs (4) through (6), respectively; and

(3) in paragraph (5), as so redesignated, by inserting "Red River," after "Franklin,".

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—

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

(2) PENDING CASES NOT AFFECTED.—This section and the amendments made by this section shall not affect any action commenced before the effective date of this section and pending in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Texas on such date.

(3) JURIES NOT AFFECTED.—This section and the amendments made by this section shall not affect the composition, or preclude the service, of any grand or petit jury summoned, impaneled, or actually serving in the Eastern Judicial District of Texas on the effective date of this section.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER) and the gentleman from California (Mr. BERMAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on S. 1720, the Senate bill currently under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Today when I was driving in, I followed a car that had a big bumper sticker on it that said "Don't Mess with Texas," and I came to the House today with great fear and trepidation that by messing with Texas and deciding where the Federal courts will sit, I would be caught in the crossfire of a Texas cat fight, and I am happy to report that the cats are purring and the Members can mess with Texas and not get in trouble by passing this bill.

Senate 1720 implements the March, 1991, Judicial Conference proposal to designate Plano, Texas, as a place for holding court in the Eastern District of Texas. It also realigns the divisions of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Texas to reflect the closing of the courthouse in Denton County. The Paris division is eliminated and its counties redistributed among the other divisions of this court.

Plano is the largest city in the Eastern District of Texas. Of the 93 judicial districts in the United States, the Eastern District of Texas is the only one in which its largest city cannot hold Federal court.

This is a major impediment to the efficient operations of the Federal court system in the Eastern District of

Texas. Senate 1720 will greatly assist the affected citizens, litigants, lawyers, and judges and also will promote the efficient administration of justice.

The bill is identical to language in section 102 of H.R. 1302, the Federal Courts Improvement Act of 2003, which was introduced by the chairman and ranking member of the Subcommittee on Courts, the Internet, and Intellectual Property. In addition, this Congress has passed this exact language on five previous occasions since 1991.

Following Senate passage of Senate 1720, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HALL) expressed concern that the legislation does not ensure that the eastern district caseload will be distributed equally between Plano and Sherman. While the judges of the eastern district have unanimously agreed to split the docket between Sherman and Plano, this agreement, in a signed resolution, is nonbinding.

I share the concerns of the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HALL). Therefore, I support Senate 1720 premised on the understanding that the judges of the eastern district will do as they promised by implementing a system to assign at least 50 percent of the cases filed in or transferred to the Sherman district to a resident district judge sitting in the city of Sherman. The remaining 50 percent of the cases will be assigned to the Plano court.

Finally, in response to my request for assurance that the judges' agreement will be implemented, the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts has written a letter promising to do whatever is necessary to implement this plan. I will insert this letter along with the resolution signed by the judges of the Eastern District of Texas into the RECORD. With these assurances, I am sure that we can mess with Texas and not get caught in the crossfire.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

JUDICIAL CONFERENCE
OF THE UNITED STATES,

Washington, DC, November 19, 2003.

Hon. F. JAMES SENSENBRENNER, Jr.,
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary, House
of Representatives, Rayburn House Office
Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I understand that S. 1720, a bill to designate Plano, Texas, will be considered by the House later today. The bill would remedy a serious problem hindering efficient judicial administration in the Eastern District of Texas.

This bill has the strong support of the Judicial Conference of the United States. As a provision of an omnibus court improvement bill, it has been passed by the House in two previous Congresses, only to remain unacted upon in the Senate.

The judges of the Eastern District of Texas have formally resolved that half of the Sherman Division caseload will be docketed and tried in Sherman, Texas, and half will be docketed and tried in Plano, Texas. A copy of an order of the court of June 13, 2003, stating this specifically and in some detail is enclosed hereto.

The Judicial Conference and the court in the Eastern District of Texas are well aware of the concerns of those in Sherman that the judicial business of the division would be

largely transferred to Plano. This is not and will not be the case. This issue was considered by the Judicial Conference Committee on Court Administration and Case Management when the proposal was first considered. The resolve of the judges to assure equity to Sherman, Texas, and other factors relating to the great need for a court presence in Plano caused that committee to recommend that the Judicial Conference approve this proposal, which it did.

I congratulate you and the members of the Judiciary Committee for taking prompt action on this bill which will allow the court to better service the citizens of this region of Texas.

Sincerely,

LEONIDAS RALPH MECHAM,
Secretary.

Enclosure.

GENERAL ORDER NO. 03-15

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS

RESOLUTION REGARDING PLACES OF HOLDING
COURT IN THE SHERMAN DIVISION

Since 1991, both this court and the Judicial Conference of the United States have supported legislation authorizing Plano as a place of holding court in the Sherman Division. Rapid population growth in the Sherman Division over the past decade, particularly in Collin and Denton Counties, underscores the need for an additional court facility. Sherman Division civil and criminal weighted filings over the past five years have grown by 100%. Sherman now has the second heaviest weighted caseload of the six divisions in the Eastern District of Texas.

In the near future, two resident district judges, a resident magistrate judge and a visiting district judge will be hearing all Sherman Division cases in only two courtrooms. The court has already run out of room in Sherman and needs to acquire additional court facilities in the Division. Having court facilities in both Sherman and Plano will enable the court to better manage the rapidly growing caseload and provide better service to a large population base in southern Collin County.

It is the court's intention, when a place of holding court in Plano is authorized, to assign the case filings as follows:

50% civil and criminal cases docketed and tried in Sherman (Judges Brown and Davis).

50% civil and criminal cases docketed and tried in Plano (Judge Schell).

In light of the above, the judges of this court hereby REAFFIRM our prior resolution to establish Plano as a place of holding court in the Sherman Division, and RESOLVE, if pending legislation passes that authorizes Plano as a place of holding court, to have half the Sherman Division caseload docketed and tried in Sherman, and the other half of the caseload docketed and tried in Plano. If Judge Brown ceases holding court in Sherman, a new resident judge shall be designated to hold court in Sherman as soon as possible, and pending the new judge's residing in Sherman, 50% of civil and criminal cases shall be docketed and tried in Sherman, and the clerk's office in Sherman shall remain staffed sufficiently to support a resident judge.

Signed this 13th day of June, 2003.

For the Court:

John Hannah, Jr.,
Chief Judge.

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

□ 1800

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 1720 and I ask my colleagues to support the bill as well. It is a narrow bill, but a necessary one. It is identical to the provisions of the Federal Courts Improvement Act currently before the Committee on the Judiciary, and to legislation which has I think several times passed the House.

The purpose of the bill is to allow for Federal court proceedings and an additional courthouse in Plano, Texas. As a result, the bill will remedy a critical problem hindering the efficient judicial administration of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Texas.

The existing courthouse is in Sherman, Texas and is overburdened by its increasing caseload. Filings over the past 5 years have grown by 100 percent. This situation mandates a solution. S. 1720 designates Plano as an additional place of holding court to help address this expanded workload.

The one substantive concern about the bill, how cases will be distributed between the two courthouses, has been resolved. As I understand it, the chairman of the Committee on the Judiciary has agreed to engage in a colloquy with the distinguished gentleman from Texas in which it will become clear that S. 1720 is intended to relieve the overflow of filings in the Sherman courthouse, but not do away with the Sherman courthouse. I think the chairman has already made that clear, that that is his intention.

Furthermore, there is agreement from the Senate sponsor, the junior Senator from Texas, that the civil and criminal case filings for the Sherman division will be split 50-50 between the Plano and Sherman courthouses. The U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Texas has adopted a resolution memorializing this agreement, and the Judicial Conference of the United States has sent a letter to the same effect. Finally, the Committee on the Judiciary Report on the Federal Courts Improvement Act, which currently contains identical provisions, will reflect this understanding. Through these measures, we can rest assured that the addition of this courthouse will have no negative impact on the Sherman courthouse.

I appreciate the efforts that my colleagues have made to address the concerns of those in Sherman, and I am confident that there is general agreement that the judicial business of the Sherman and Plano divisions will be shared equally.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to support S. 1720.

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

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON).

(Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman yielding me this time. I just want to

thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HALL) and the gentleman from California (Mr. BERMAN) for working with us.

This is a bipartisan agreement. I will let my colleagues know that Collin County is expected to increase by 73 percent in population by the year 2020, so this is a needed court and long overdue.

Mr. Speaker, you know, the role of the Federal Government is to serve people. And one way the government serves the people is through the judicial system.

Well, the people of Plano, nearly 250,000 strong and the largest city in Collin County, do not have access to a nearby Federal court. Simply put, today's bill is good legislation that is long overdue. Anytime a lawyer wants to file a court paper, they have to drive 48 miles to near the Oklahoma border to Sherman, TX. Anytime a police officer needs to sign a legal document, they have to drive nearly 100 miles round trip. That is not time well spent.

If the role of the Federal Government is to serve the people, then it's time to let Collin County hold court. You know, Plano consumes more than three-fourths of the criminal cases in Sherman and nearly 4 out of 5 civil cases. Clearly there is a need in Plano for a Federal bench. The people of Collin County and the Eastern District of Texas are woefully underserved.

On the top of that, the population of Collin County is expected to increase by 73 percent by the year 2020. If we don't take care of this now, when will we?

With four judges but just two courtrooms, the Sherman division badly needs another courtroom somewhere. That somewhere should be the city of Plano. Important to the city of Sherman, the bill also protects the Grayson County Courthouse Docket by expanding the Sherman Court jurisdiction to four new counties; Fannin, Lamar, Delta, and Hopkins.

I also want to thank my friend Ralph Hall for his work on this issue. I hope he believes we addressed many of his initial concerns.

Before I close, I'd like to thank my colleagues in the Senate, Senators CORNYN and HUTCHISON, who helped get this bill through the other body.

This measure has passed the House every Congress since 1991, only to die in committee in the Senate. Their leadership paved the way to make this possible for Collin County.

In the name of good government, the Federal Government started serving the people of Collin County.

GENERAL ORDER NO. 03-15
IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS
RESOLUTION REGARDING PLACES OF HOLDING
COURT IN THE SHERMAN DIVISION

Since 1991, both this court and the Judicial Conference of the United States have supported legislation authorizing Plano as a place of holding court in the Sherman Division. Rapid population growth in the Sherman Division over the past decade, particularly in Collin and Denton Counties, underscores the need for an additional court facility. Sherman Division civil and criminal weighted filings over the past five years have grown by 100%. Sherman now has the second heaviest weighted caseload of the six divisions in the Eastern District of Texas.

In the near future, two resident district judges, a resident magistrate judge and a vis-

iting district judge will be hearing all Sherman Division cases in only two courtrooms. The court has already run out of room in Sherman and needs to acquire additional court facilities in the Division. Having court facilities in both Sherman and Plano will enable the court to better manage the rapidly growing caseload and provide better service to a large population base in southern Collin County.

It is the court's intention, when a place of holding court in Plano is authorized, to assign the case filings as follows:

50% civil and criminal cases docketed and tried in Sherman (Judges Brown and Davis)
50% civil and criminal cases docketed and tried in Plano (Judge Schell)

In light of the above, the judges of this court hereby REAFFIRM our prior resolution to establish Plano as a place of holding court in the Sherman Division, and RESOLVE, if pending legislation passes that authorizes Plano as a place of holding court, to have half the Sherman Division caseload docketed and tried in Sherman, and the other half of the caseload docketed and tried in Plano. The court intends to maintain at least one resident judge in Sherman and one resident judge in Plano. If Judge Brown ceases holding court in Sherman, a new resident judge shall be designated to hold court in Sherman as soon as possible, and pending the new judge's residing in Sherman, 50% of civil and criminal cases shall be docketed and tried in Sherman, and the clerk's office in Sherman shall remain staffed sufficiently to support a resident judge.

Signed this 13th day of June, 2003.

For the Court:

John Hannah, Jr.
Chief Judge.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HALL).

Mr. HALL. Mr. Speaker, when I arrived at the Capitol today, I was handed the floor schedule that indicated that Senate bill 1720 had been placed on the Suspension Calendar. We have not had a lot of time to try to work out the details, but I am grateful to a lot of people for their assurance that we are going to keep the agreement that has been made between the two courts.

First, I want to thank, of course, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Chairman SENSENBRENNER), Debby Lehman, Sam Garg, Blain Merritt, and Phil Kiko for their good work and for their support. I thank the ranking member, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS), of the Committee on the Judiciary and Perry Applebaum. I thank the gentleman from California (Mr. BERMAN), my friend and ranking member on the subcommittee, and Shanna Winters and Alec French. They have all worked hard during the course of the day to work out assurance, and with the gentleman from Texas's (Mr. JOHNSON) support of assurance that this will be a 50-50 division.

I have never opposed Plano having a court. It is a huge city. It is a great city. It is a growing city. And as we move along with this 50-50 agreement and Plano grows, as it surely will, they will need more judges and more courts there. I certainly hope to help them.

For several years, efforts have been made to hold court proceedings in Plano, Texas where they have had no

court proceedings. I have no objection to such, and I only want to continue holding court in Sherman, Texas. Agreements have been made to hold 50 percent of the cases in Plano and 50 percent in Sherman, adding some counties to the Sherman district. I only want this agreement to be part of the proceedings, and I will be asking for a colloquy in a little bit with the gentleman from Wisconsin (Chairman SENSENBRENNER). I have conferred with Judge McGraw of Grayson County. I have received petitions from Judge McGraw and many of the major cities in and around Grayson County. I represent them. If I do not represent them, they will not be represented in this matter, and I want to be recorded here and now that we want an agreement of a 50-50 division of litigation to be committed to writing, both here and in the Senate.

I have spoken with Senator JOHN CORNYN then of the Committee on the Judiciary, and I have spoken with Senator KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON, subcommittee chairman, and they too want this documentation. There has been a difference of opinion as to whether or not it would be codified into the statute itself, and while this will not have that codification, there will be report language that will be with this bill, and I think will be evidence to people within the next 10, 15, 20, 30, 40 years that we still want a court in Sherman, Texas in Grayson County.

Senator KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON and JOHN CORNYN want Grayson County protected on the 50-50 agreement and, accordingly, they are placing proper report language in the Senate Committee on the Judiciary report to be placed with the passage of Senate bill 1720.

So Mr. Speaker, first, let me place in the RECORD the statement of the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS), the ranking member on the Committee on the Judiciary.

I also want to engage in a colloquy with my colleague, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Chairman SENSENBRENNER). I again thank the chairman on S. 1720, a bill to provide for the Federal court proceedings in Plano, Texas.

It is my understanding that we have reached an agreement with Members on both sides of the aisle and with Senators CORNYN and HUTCHISON that the passage of this legislation shall be accompanied by the following report language in the Commerce, Justice, State Appropriations bill that would indicate a sense of Congress as follows: "Both Sherman and Plano shall have a resident United States District Judge. Fifty percent of the cases filed in or transferred to the Sherman Division of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Texas shall be assigned for trial and tried in Sherman by either the resident United States District Judge sitting in Sherman or another United States District Judge assigned to hold court in Sherman. The remaining 50 percent of the cases shall

be assigned for trial and tried in Plano by either the resident United States District Judge sitting in Plano or another United States District Judge assigned to hold court in Plano. If the resident judge in Sherman or Plano retires or dies, 50 percent of the cases shall continue to be tried in Sherman and 50 percent tried in Plano while a new resident judge is being assigned. This provision shall not prevent the transfer of a case to another judge or division of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Texas or another United States District Court for trial, if such transfer is permitted by applicable law."

Mr. Speaker, I have long expressed my support and I have no objection to a Plano district court. The people in Plano are entitled to a court and, likewise, the people of Sherman are entitled to an assurance that an addition of a Plano court will not diminish or otherwise imperil the court in Sherman. The folks in Plano are happy with the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON), and they should be. I want the people in Grayson County to be happy with this transaction also. I think this report language gives clarity to this amendment and would ensure the viability of both courts for the next 50 years.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. HALL. I yield to the gentleman from Wisconsin.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, the Committee on the Judiciary has no control over report language of bills that are under the jurisdiction of the Committee on Appropriations, and since the thought has been to have this statutory amendment placed in the Commerce, Justice, State Appropriation bill, I can say that the Committee on the Judiciary would have no objection to this, because this codifies the agreement that has been made and the resolution that has been adopted by the judges of the Eastern District of Texas, as well as confirmed by the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts representing the Judicial Conference of the United States.

So I have no objection to this statutory amendment if it should find its way into an appropriation bill. But the gentleman from Texas and everybody else knows full well that what happens in appropriation bills at the end of a session of Congress is a very mysterious thing that those of us who serve on authorizing committees will never understand as long as we are here.

But rest assured that what the gentleman from Texas has said does represent the understanding of members of the Committee on the Judiciary, and if the appropriators will listen to us, for once, they will be able to make a constructive addition to an appropriation bill, whether it is the State, Justice, Commerce one or another one that mysteriously arises from the bowels of the Capitol within the next few days.

Mr. HALL. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, we have Senator CORNYN and Senator HUTCHISON who will place this in the report language in the Senate judiciary bill.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this legislation, which would provide greater access to Federal courts for litigants in various counties in Texas. One provision of the bill adds the city of Plano as a place of holding court; current residents of Plano must travel to the city of Sherman. It is my understanding that, with respect to the courthouses in Plano and Sherman, the courts will ensure that the civil and criminal dockets will be divided equally.

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

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I am happy to yield back the balance of my time as well.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SWEENEY). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill, S. 1720.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION ADVANCEMENT ACT OF 2003

Mr. GREENWOOD. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 421) to reauthorize the United States Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 421

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 "Environmental Policy and Conflict Resolution Advancement Act of 2003".

SEC. 2. ENVIRONMENTAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION FUND.

Section 13 of the Morris K. Udall Scholarship and Excellence in National Environmental and Native American Public Policy Act of 1992 (20 U.S.C. 5609) is amended by striking subsection (b) and inserting the following:

"(b) ENVIRONMENTAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION FUND.—There is authorized to be appropriated to the Environmental Dispute Resolution Fund established by section 10 \$4,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2004 through 2008, of which—

"(1) \$3,000,000 shall be used to pay operations costs (including not more than \$1,000 for official reception and representation expenses); and

"(2) \$1,000,000 shall be used for grants or other appropriate arrangements to pay the costs of services provided in a neutral manner relating to, and to support the participation of non-Federal entities (such as State and local governments, tribal governments, nongovernmental organizations, and individuals) in, environmental conflict resolution proceedings involving Federal agencies."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from