

With best wishes, I am,
Sincerely,

JEFF TRANDAHL,
Clerk.

moot and no Rule VIII determinations are required.

Sincerely,

WALTER B. JONES,
Member of Congress.

□ 1745

SPECIAL ORDERS

AUTHORIZING SPEAKER TO DISPENSE WITH ORGANIZATIONAL AND LEGISLATIVE BUSINESS ON ANY DAY HOUSE CONVENES PURSUANT TO SECTION 2 OF HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 80

Mr. McCOTTER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that on any day when the House convenes pursuant to section 2 of House Joint Resolution 80, the Speaker may dispense with organizational and legislative business.

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

There was no objection.

COMMUNICATION FROM DISTRICT DIRECTOR OF HONORABLE FRANK PALLONE, MEMBER OF CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from Paul Dement, District Director of the Honorable FRANK PALLONE, Member of Congress:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, November 24, 2003.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: This is to formally notify you, pursuant to Rule VIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, that I have been served with a civil subpoena for documents issued by the Superior Court of New Jersey, Ocean County.

After consultation with the Office of General Counsel, I have determined that it is consistent with the precedents and privileges of the House to notify the party that issued the subpoena that I do not have any responsive documents.

Sincerely,

PAUL DEMENT,
District Director.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE HONORABLE WALTER B. JONES OF NORTH CAROLINA, MEMBER OF CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Honorable WALTER B. JONES of North Carolina, Member of Congress:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, December 2, 2003.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: This is to notify you formally, pursuant to Rule VIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, that I have received a subpoena for testimony issued by the Superior Court of Pender County, North Carolina.

After consultation with the Office of General Counsel, I have determined that, because I received the subpoena after the date requested for testimony, the subpoena is

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

COMMENDING JUDY W. STEVENS FOR HER WORK AND DEDICATION TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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

Mr. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to congratulate and praise an individual who has dedicated herself to improving North Carolina. Judy Stevens is a remarkable person in many ways, and I want to acknowledge her accomplishments and efforts in economic development.

Judy grew up in Star, North Carolina, located in Montgomery County. She attended East Montgomery High School and continued her education at Randolph Community College. She is a certified economic developer from the Economic Development Institute, which is administered by the University of Oklahoma.

Judy began her work in the economic development field when she accepted a job as administrative assistant for the director of the Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation in 1992. With her strong knowledge of the county and its people, combined with her knowledge of economic development, she quickly excelled at her job; so fast, that by 1993 she became the director of the EDC.

Any good leader knows that success depends upon the efforts of many. Judy created the Committee of 100, a group of business leaders throughout the county who were willing to invest time and money in recruiting new businesses to Montgomery County. Long-term success depends on future leadership. She established the Leadership Montgomery Program for Adults and Youth through the Montgomery County Chamber of Congress, which is currently in its 10th year.

Judy Stevens is someone who understands that economic development success requires cooperation across political jurisdictional lines. In her own county, Judy is currently working on a project to develop a regional wastewater system for the towns of Boscpe, Star, and Troy. In the past, this type of cooperation was not common. However, with Judy's determination and leadership, folks are willing to come to the table and work for the good of the entire area.

Most recently, Judy has taken on a much larger task by leading the eighth

district's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, CEDS, project. CEDS is a program sponsored by the Economic Development Administration, which seeks to develop a regional plan of action to attract investment and to create jobs. The committee is comprised of local economic development, education, and chamber officials.

Judy has worked tirelessly with the members of the CEDS committee to develop a final recommendation to present to EDA. I am pleased to tell you that because of her effort and strong leadership, the community has come to consensus on a proposal that will serve as a blueprint for regional economic development for the Eighth District of North Carolina and the rest of the country. I look forward to working with her and the CEDS committee as we put this plan into action.

Judy's hard work and talent have been recognized across the State. In 1999, she was named Economic Developer of the Year for North Carolina by the North Carolina Economic Developers Association. This recognition displays the type of commitment and dedication Judy puts into her job and into her community.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot tell you how much I appreciate Judy Stevens' tireless dedication and her desire to increase the quality of life for Montgomery County, the eighth district, and North Carolina as a whole. She has gone above and beyond the call of duty to help create and sustain economic development; and as a citizen of North Carolina, I join many in sincerely thanking her.

I would also like to acknowledge Judy's family that has been there backing her in every effort and success. Judy has a loving family. The Stevens family includes her husband, Gerald, along with their two sons, a daughter, and three grandsons. I am sure they are as proud as I am of her many accomplishments and her dedication to her profession.

MERRY CHRISTMAS, PhRMA

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

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, President Bush signed the Medicare bill today, ending an ugly legislative process driven by the interests of a constituency near and dear to the Republican leadership in this House. Not America's seniors. I am talking about the prescription drug industry.

The vast quantities of time and money that the drug companies invested in selling this bill were well spent. This bill is a Christmas wish come true for every drug manufacturer in our Nation. Under the new bill, drug industry profits are expected to increase by \$140 billion, a 40 percent increase in already the world's most profitable industry.

This industry, the world's most profitable industry, successfully used its

675 lobbyists in this town, about 1.3 lobbyist for every Member of the House, and used its tens of millions of dollars of campaign contributions to win a giant increase in profits at the expense of taxpayers in this country and at the expense of America's senior citizens. The drug companies on this year's Fortune 500 list posted profits of 17 percent, 5½ times the average profit margin of other Fortune 500 firms.

Not only does the Medicare bill signed today by President Bush dramatically expand the drug industry's market, it ensures that drug companies will be able to charge American taxpayers almost any price they want for medicines covered by Medicare. The word on the street in Washington is that the drug industry, PhRMA, Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers Association, PhRMA, is going to contribute \$100 million to President Bush's reelection campaign.

That is why this bill specifically prohibits the government from negotiating fair prices for press medicines. That is right, the Federal Government is not allowed under this bill to even bargain for better drug prices on behalf of seniors or on behalf of American taxpayers. It is what the drug industry wants. And the drug industry in this body always gets what it wants.

The bill the President signed into law relies on the same price discount mechanisms private insurers use, the same mechanisms that have led to double-digit increases in prescription drug costs year after year after year. It is what the drug industry wants. And the drug industry always gets what it wants in the Republican-controlled U.S. House of Representatives. In the private market, prescription drug costs are the fastest-growing component of health care cost increases. Prescription drug costs in the private market increased over 18 percent last year.

The bill rejects also the bipartisan will of a commanding majority in this House, who actually did stand up against a Republican leadership and against President Bush, who actually stood up to the drug lobby in July. Two hundred forty-three of us, many from that sides of the aisle, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. PAUL) and many others, voted to give American consumers the choice to buy safe, effective and much more affordable medicine imported from Canada. The legislation that President Bush signed today not only ignores that vote; it negates it. It drives a nail in the coffin of prescription drug importation. Why? It is what the drug industry wanted, and the drug industry always gets what it wants in this institution.

Once again, American consumers lose; the drug industry wins. Drug companies routinely charge American consumers three, four, five times what they charge Canadian customers for the same medicine. As I said earlier, the world on the street in Washington is that PhRMA, the Prescription drug trade association, is going to give \$100

million to the Bush-Cheney reelection effort.

The drug industry is already 5½ times more profitable than the Fortune 500 average, yet they would have us believe any reduction in prices would jeopardize their research and development. The level of U.S. drug prices are not necessary; they are highway robbery. This bill helps to ensure that American consumers, American employers, and American taxpayers keep paying those high prices.

Merry Christmas, PhRMA.

REGARDING THE FIRST SESSION OF THE 108TH CONGRESS

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

Mr. HASTERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening with sadness at the passing of Joe Skeen. Joe Skeen was a friend of mine, a great member of this Congress for many years from New Mexico, somebody who served this Congress with great love, with great compassion, and a steady hand. We will all miss him. He chose not to run in the last Congress, but he was a great friend; and his funeral will be this coming Thursday, and later on we will have a session to honor him.

Mr. Speaker, I also rise this evening to give an end-of-the-session assessment of the first session of the 108th Congress, to recount our accomplishments and to review what we have left to do.

This session of Congress commenced as we were engaged in a struggle against terrorism and as our economy struggled in a near recession. We opened this session with three major goals: first, to make our Nation safer from terrorists and those states that support them; second, to grow our economy and create jobs for American workers; and, third, to make America a better place to live for all of our citizens. We have had a notable success in all three areas.

First, we have made this country more secure from foreign threats. The Congress passed and the President signed three different supplemental appropriation bills to support our efforts on the war on terror. This helped pay for the war in Iraq and for our continued efforts in Afghanistan. And, of course, the American people are greatly concerned for the safety of our troops in both places, but we must continue to support our brave men and women as they fight to defend our freedom and to defeat the terrorists who want to bring death and destruction to our homeland.

Saddam Hussein's Iraqi regime and the Taliban's Afghan regime actively supported terrorist organizations. Al-Qaeda trained in both countries. Now, both countries are making the tough, but vitally important, transition to democratic government. Changing terrorist-supporting dictatorships into de-

mocracies is hard work, but it is important work for our national security.

We also passed defense appropriations and authorization bills that included necessary long-term funding for our defense efforts and included a pay increase for our troops and a historic change in the disabled veterans compensation. For the first time since the Civil War, many disabled veterans will be able to receive both their disability payments and their retirement benefits.

The President also signed into law the Military Family Tax Relief Act, which provides overdue tax relief targeted to our dedicated servicemen and their families.

September 11 also proved that we must be vigilant on our home front. That is why we created the Department of Homeland Security in the last Congress. In this session we created a Select Committee on Homeland Security and a Subcommittee on Homeland Security of the Committee on Appropriations so that this Department would have the proper funding and oversight. Indeed, the Congress completed work on the first appropriation bill dedicated solely to homeland security this year.

The second challenge we faced at the beginning of this year was a slowing economy. The economy faced the twin shocks of a bursting high-tech bubble and the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington. Those shocks undermined both business and consumer confidence, while shattering investor confidence. We had to do something about it. We passed the President's economic growth package aimed at restoring confidence in the business, consumer, and investor sectors. Coupled with the earlier tax cut signed into law in 2001, these tax relief bills accomplished all three goals. It gave small businesses the relief they needed to buy more equipment and incentives to expand their businesses. It returned more money to consumers so that they could spend more. And it inspired investors to return back to the markets.

The results have been better than expected. The economic growth rate hit 8.2 percent in the last quarter. Manufacturing output is at the highest levels in 2 decades. The Dow Jones has reached its highest level in 18 months. And the job rate shows the best signs of improvement in 2 years.

□ 1800

Aside from the war and the economy, our Nation faced other challenges.

Health care costs continue to be one of the top concerns of our citizens. We passed historic reform of the Medicare system that will now include a prescription drug benefit for the first time in history. I am very proud that we kept our promise to senior citizens by delivering this most important reform.

The prescription drug benefit means that never again will low-income seniors have to face the choice between putting food on the table or paying for