

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER
PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later today.

AMERICAN HISTORY AND CIVICS
EDUCATION ACT OF 2004

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5360) to authorize grants to establish academies for teachers and students of American history and civics, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 5360

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 "American History and Civics Education Act of 2004".

SEC. 2. PRESIDENTIAL ACADEMIES FOR TEACHING OF AMERICAN HISTORY AND CIVICS; CONGRESSIONAL ACADEMIES FOR STUDENTS OF AMERICAN HISTORY AND CIVICS.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary of Education (referred to in this Act as the "Secretary") may award not more than 12 grants, on a competitive basis—

(1) to entities to establish Presidential Academies for Teaching of American History and Civics that may offer workshops for both veteran and new teachers of American history and civics; and

(2) to entities to establish Congressional Academies for Students of American History and Civics.

(b) APPLICATION.—An entity that desires to receive a grant under subsection (a) shall submit an application to the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Secretary may require.

(c) DEMONSTRATED EXPERTISE.—The Secretary shall require that each entity, to be eligible to receive a grant under this section, demonstrate expertise in historical methodology or the teaching of history.

(d) AVAILABLE FUNDS.—To carry out this section, the Secretary may use any funds appropriated for fiscal year 2005 or any subsequent fiscal year to carry out part D of title V of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7241 et seq.).

SEC. 3. NATIONAL HISTORY DAY PROGRAM.

The Secretary may award grants to the National History Day Program for the purpose of continuing and expanding its activities to promote the study of history and improve instruction.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE) and the gentleman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) 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 in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 5360.

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.

Today the House will consider H.R. 5360, the American History and Civics Education Act of 2004. This bill, which was introduced by my colleague from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER), is intended to support programs that will help raise student academic achievement by improving the knowledge, understanding and appreciation of American history and civics education for our Nation's teachers and students.

According to the 2001 National Assessment of Educational Progress assessment in United States history, 33 percent of students in grades 4 scored below basic, 36 percent of students in grade 8 scored below basic, and 57 percent of students in grade 12 scored below basic.

In addition, the data from the assessment revealed that 92 percent of students in grade 12 could not explain the most important cause of the Great Depression, 91 percent of students in grade 8 could not list two issues that were important in causing the Civil War, and 73 percent of the students in grade 4 could not identify the Constitution from among four choices as the document that contains the basic rules used to run the United States Government.

Accordingly, H.R. 5360 is designed to improve student academic achievement in American history and civics education by authorizing the Secretary of Education to use existing funds to award grants to entities to establish Presidential Academies for Teaching of American History and Civics to help strengthen the teaching skills and knowledge of teachers in American history and civics. H.R. 5360 also authorizes the use of existing funds at the Department of Education for Congressional Academies for Students of American History and Civics to help broaden secondary students' knowledge of American history and civics.

Finally, this legislation authorizes the Secretary to use existing funds to award grants to the National History Day program to promote the study of history and improve instruction. The purpose of H.R. 5360 is to help our Nation's students and teachers develop a deeper understanding and appreciation of American history and civics education. I urge my colleagues to support the legislation.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I support this bill. Just as an aside, I would like to say, as a Member of Congress, if there is any subject I wish I had paid more attention to, it would have been American history. I support this bill, which improves history and civics education, primarily by funding workshops for

history teachers. It recognizes the importance of teaching our children history and allows for Federal support for an effective and widely respected program, National History Day.

This bill creates both Presidential Academies for Teaching of American History and Civics and Congressional Academies for Students of American History and Civics. I am pleased that it will ensure that these are quality programs by ensuring that grants are awarded only to those who have demonstrated expertise in historical methodology or the teaching of history.

A very important feature of this legislation authorizes the Secretary of Education to award grants to the National History Day program, a highly successful, year-long national program that trains teachers and sponsors a national competition among junior high and high school students. They produce dramatic performances, imaginative exhibits, multimedia documentaries and research papers based on research related to an annual theme.

The National History Day program, which reaches 2 million people annually from nearly every State, teaches students important literacy skills and engages them in the use and understanding of museum and library resources. It inspires students to study local history and challenges them to expand their thinking and apply knowledge of local events to national and, at times, international issues. The program also teaches students to become technologically literate through the use of computer and Internet research methods and the use of technologically advanced applications in their presentations.

For more than 25 years, National History Day has used history to help students develop research, thinking and communication skills. I am pleased that this bill would help continue and expand its important activities.

All Americans benefit from a better understanding of history, and this bill is a positive step toward ensuring that future generations have the background and tools for appreciating history and applying those lessons to our daily lives.

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

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER), sponsor of this legislation in the House of Representatives, himself one who cares deeply about history.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend from Delaware as well as my friend from California for their remarks so far in this debate. I also want to thank the chairman of the full committee, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER), who, Mr. Speaker, has been enormously patient and helpful to me during this year-long effort to promote better knowledge of American history and civics. Thanks also goes to the ranking member of the full committee as well as the entire House leadership. I am very appreciative.

Mr. Speaker, we meet today in a Chamber that exhibits a magnificent portrait of George Washington just to my left. We meet at a location actually selected by George Washington, the father of our country. Just above the Speaker's podium is a profound quote from another of our distinguished patriots, Daniel Webster. We are governed today by rules promulgated in part by Thomas Jefferson, the author of the Declaration of Independence and another of our great founders.

In that atmosphere, Mr. Speaker, it is perhaps hard for us to imagine that not everyone in our country shares our appreciation for this great system of government and this wonderful tradition and history of freedom and independence that we have in America or has even a rudimentary knowledge of that great system of government. Yet, sadly, as I talk to my colleagues about this issue, they have observed the same thing as they travel around the country that I have: an appalling, even shocking, lack of knowledge about American history and our American system. This is particularly true among our young people.

Just a few facts, Mr. Speaker. Sixty-two percent of Americans today cannot name the three branches of the Federal Government. An examination was given to seniors in 55 of our Nation's top colleges and universities, including Brown, Harvard and Princeton. The exam contained 34 questions, multiple choice, testing a high school level of proficiency on American history. Some 81 percent of the seniors in these colleges received either a D or an F on these examinations. Seventy-five percent of our high school seniors are not proficient in American history and civics, and one-third lack even a basic knowledge of this subject matter.

Part of the reason for this, Mr. Speaker, is that the curriculum at these same 55 elite universities does not require an American history course for graduation and 78 percent require no history credit at all to graduate from the best colleges and universities in our land. As a result of this fact, over one-half of our high school history teachers received their college degrees in subjects other than history.

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This is not their fault, Mr. Speaker. This is simply a fact which we are trying to address today.

Simply put, what this bill does, as my friend from Delaware stated, is to authorize the Secretary of Education to award competitive grants from existing funds for summer academies that would promote civics and history education. The grants would be available to colleges and universities, to museums, libraries, nonprofit organizations, some of which are already engaged in this type of activity, and other entities that can demonstrate the capability to enhance the subject matter.

The sessions for teachers would focus on new ideas and more creative ways to

communicate the history and civics curriculum to students. It would not dictate a curriculum. Separate academies for students would provide a unique and more comprehensive look at the important subjects of civics and education.

I would say to the Members in closing, Mr. Speaker, that this legislation has the support of a wide spectrum of Americans, from Paul Weyrich and Bill Bennett on the right, to Senator TED KENNEDY at the other end of the political spectrum. I think it simply demonstrates this: that knowledge and understanding of America and Americanism really has no ideology.

I again express my thanks to the leadership of the committee and of House of Representatives, and I urge a "yes" vote on the bill.

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

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I urge support of the legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHIMKUS). 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. 5360, 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.

DIRECTING SECRETARY OF SENATE TO CORRECT ENROLLMENT OF S. 150

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and concur in the Senate concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 146) to direct the Secretary of the Senate to make corrections in the enrollment of the bill, S. 150.

The Clerk read as follows:

S. CON. RES. 146

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring). That, in the enrollment of the bill (S. 150) to extend the moratorium on taxes on Internet access and multiple and discriminatory taxes on electronic commerce imposed by the Internet Tax Freedom Act, the Secretary of the Senate shall make the following corrections:

(1) Amend subsection (a) of section 1104 of the Internet Tax Freedom Act (47 U.S.C. 151 note), as added by section 3 of the bill, to read as follows:

"(a) PRE-OCTOBER 1998 TAXES.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 1101(a) does not apply to a tax on Internet access that was generally imposed and actually enforced prior to October 1, 1998, if, before that date—

"(A) the tax was authorized by statute; and

"(B) either—

"(i) a provider of Internet access services had a reasonable opportunity to know, by virtue of a rule or other public proclamation made by the appropriate administrative agency of the State or political subdivision thereof, that such agency has interpreted and applied such tax to Internet access services; or

"(ii) a State or political subdivision thereof generally collected such tax on charges for Internet access.

"(2) TERMINATION.—

"(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subparagraph (B), this subsection shall not apply after November 1, 2007.

"(B) STATE TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICE TAX.—

"(i) DATE FOR TERMINATION.—This subsection shall not apply after November 1, 2006, with respect to a State telecommunications service tax described in clause (ii).

"(ii) DESCRIPTION OF TAX.—A State telecommunications service tax referred to in subclause (i) is a State tax—

"(I) enacted by State law on or after October 1, 1991, and imposing a tax on telecommunications service; and

"(II) applied to Internet access through administrative code or regulation issued on or after December 1, 2002."

(2) Insert after section 6 of the bill the following:

SEC. 6A. EXCEPTION FOR TEXAS MUNICIPAL ACCESS LINE FEE.

The Internet Tax Freedom Act (47 U.S.C. 151 note), as amended by section 6, is amended by adding at the end the following:

"SEC. 1109. EXCEPTION FOR TEXAS MUNICIPAL ACCESS LINE FEE.

"Nothing in this Act shall prohibit Texas or a political subdivision thereof from imposing or collecting the Texas municipal access line fee pursuant to Texas Local Govt. Code Ann. ch. 283 (Vernon 2005) and the definition of access line as determined by the Public Utility Commission of Texas in its 'Order Adopting Amendments to Section 26.465 As Approved At The February 13, 2003 Public Hearing', issued March 5, 2003, in Project No. 26412."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER) and the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. WATT) 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. Con. Res. 146 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.

Mr. Speaker, the enrolling resolution before us from the other body makes some modest, but important, changes to S. 150, a bill to extend the moratorium on Internet access taxes and multiple and discriminatory Internet taxes, which we will consider in a few minutes. When we move to that bill, I will describe the underlying legislation. For now I will just state that the changes made by this enrolling resolution are necessary in order for me to support passage of S. 150.

The most important change to S. 150 contained in the enrolling resolution is that it will apply the same moratorium on Internet access taxes to my home