

Ukraine has tremendous potential. An independent, democratic Ukraine where the rule of law prevails is vital to the security and stability of Europe. Ukrainian authorities need to radically improve the election environment, however, if there is to be hope for these elections to meet those standards.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution urges the Ukrainian government to guarantee freedom of association and assembly, and it is not guaranteed now; ensure full transparency of the election process; free access for Ukrainian and international election observers; and unimpeded access by all candidates to the media on a nondiscriminatory basis.

I urge all Members to support this.

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

Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MURPHY). The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 415, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF S. 878, CREATING ADDITIONAL FEDERAL COURT JUDGESHIPS

Mr. SESSIONS (during consideration of H. Con. Res. 415) from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 108-723) on the resolution (H. Res. 814) providing for consideration of the bill (S. 878) to authorize an additional permanent judgeship in the district of Idaho, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

BELARUS DEMOCRACY ACT OF 2004

Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 854) to provide for the promotion of democracy, human rights, and rule of law in the Republic of Belarus and for the consolidation and strengthening of Belarus sovereignty and independence, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 854

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 “Belarus Democracy Act of 2004”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) The United States supports the promotion of democracy, respect for human rights, and the rule of law in the Republic of Belarus consistent with its commitments as a participating state of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

(2) The United States has a vital interest in the independence and sovereignty of the Republic of Belarus and its integration into the European community of democracies.

(3) In November 1996, Lukashenka orchestrated an illegal and unconstitutional referendum that enabled him to impose a new constitution, abolish the duly-elected parliament, the 13th Supreme Soviet, install a largely powerless National Assembly, and extend his term of office to 2001.

(4) Democratic forces in Belarus have organized peaceful demonstrations against the Lukashenka regime in cities and towns throughout Belarus which led to beatings, mass arrests, and extended incarcerations.

(5) Victor Gonchar, Anatoly Krasovsky, and Yuri Zakharenka, who have been leaders and supporters of the democratic forces in Belarus, and Dmitry Zavadsky, a journalist known for his critical reporting in Belarus, have disappeared and are presumed dead.

(6) Former Belarus Government officials have come forward with credible allegations and evidence that top officials of the Lukashenka regime were involved in the disappearances.

(7) The Belarusian authorities have mounted a major systematic crackdown on civil society through the closure, harassment, and repression of nongovernmental organizations, and independent trade unions.

(8) The Belarusian authorities actively suppress freedom of speech and expression, including engaging in systematic reprisals against independent media.

(9) The Lukashenka regime has reversed the revival of Belarusian language and culture, including through the closure of the National Humanities Lyceum, the last remaining high school where classes were taught in the Belarusian language.

(10) The Lukashenka regime harasses the autocephalic Belarusian Orthodox Church, the Roman Catholic Church, the Jewish community, the Hindu Lights of Kalyasa community, evangelical Protestant churches (such as Baptist and Pentecostal groups), and other minority religious groups.

(11) The Law on Religious Freedom and Religious Organizations, passed by the National Assembly and signed by Lukashenka on October 31, 2002, establishes one of the most repressive legal regimes in the OSCE region, severely limiting religious freedom and placing excessively burdensome government controls on religious practice.

(12) The parliamentary elections of October 15, 2000, and the presidential election of September 9, 2001, were determined to be fundamentally unfair and nondemocratic.

(13) The Government of Belarus has made no substantive progress in addressing criteria established by the OSCE in 2000, ending repression and the climate of fear, permitting a functioning independent media, ensuring transparency of the elections process, and strengthening of the functions of parliament.

SEC. 3. ASSISTANCE TO PROMOTE DEMOCRACY AND CIVIL SOCIETY IN BELARUS.

(a) PURPOSES OF ASSISTANCE.—The assistance under this section shall be available for the following purposes:

(1) To assist the people of the Republic of Belarus in regaining their freedom and to enable them to join the European community of democracies.

(2) To encourage free and fair presidential, parliamentary, and local elections in

Belarus, conducted in a manner consistent with internationally accepted standards and under the supervision of internationally recognized observers.

(3) To assist in restoring and strengthening institutions of democratic governance in Belarus.

(b) AUTHORIZATION FOR ASSISTANCE.—To carry out the purposes of subsection (a), the President is authorized to furnish assistance and other support for the activities described in subsection (c), to be provided primarily for indigenous Belarusian groups that are committed to the support of democratic processes.

(c) ACTIVITIES SUPPORTED.—Activities that may be supported by assistance under subsection (b) include—

(1) the observation of elections and the promotion of free and fair electoral processes;

(2) development of democratic political parties;

(3) radio and television broadcasting to and within Belarus;

(4) the development of nongovernmental organizations promoting democracy and supporting human rights;

(5) the development of independent media working within Belarus and from locations outside the country and supported by nonstate-controlled printing facilities;

(6) international exchanges and advanced professional training programs for leaders and members of the democratic forces in skill areas central to the development of civil society; and

(7) other activities consistent with the purposes of this Act.

(d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—There are authorized to be appropriated to the President to carry out this section such sums as may be necessary for each of the fiscal years 2005 and 2006.

(2) AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS.—Amounts appropriated pursuant to the authorization of appropriations under paragraph (1) are authorized to remain available until expended.

SEC. 4. RADIO BROADCASTING TO BELARUS.

(a) PURPOSE.—It is the purpose of this section to authorize increased support for United States Government and surrogate radio broadcasting to the Republic of Belarus that will facilitate the unhindered dissemination of information.

(b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—In addition to such sums as are otherwise authorized to be appropriated, there are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary for fiscal year 2005 and each subsequent fiscal year for radio broadcasting to the people of Belarus in languages spoken in Belarus.

SEC. 5. SENSE OF CONGRESS RELATING TO SANCTIONS AGAINST BELARUS.

(a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that the sanctions described in subsection (c) should apply with respect to the Republic of Belarus until the President determines and certifies to the appropriate congressional committees that the Government of Belarus has made significant progress in meeting the conditions described in subsection (b).

(b) CONDITIONS.—The conditions referred to in subsection (a) are the following:

(1) The release of individuals in Belarus who have been jailed based on political or religious beliefs.

(2) The withdrawal of politically motivated legal charges against all opposition figures and independent journalists in Belarus.

(3) A full accounting of the disappearances of opposition leaders and journalists in Belarus, including Victor Gonchar, Anatoly Krasovsky, Yuri Zakharenka, and Dmitry Zavadsky, and the prosecution of those individuals who are responsible for their disappearances.

(4) The cessation of all forms of harassment and repression against the independent media, independent trade unions, nongovernmental organizations, religious organizations (including their leadership and members), and the political opposition in Belarus.

(5) The implementation of free and fair presidential and parliamentary elections in Belarus consistent with OSCE commitments.

(C) PROHIBITION ON LOANS AND INVESTMENT.—

(1) UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT FINANCING.—No loan, credit guarantee, insurance, financing, or other similar financial assistance should be extended by any agency of the United States Government (including the Export-Import Bank and the Overseas Private Investment Corporation) to the Government of Belarus, except with respect to the provision of humanitarian goods and agricultural or medical products.

(2) TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY.—No funds available to the Trade and Development Agency should be available for activities of the Agency in or for Belarus.

(d) MULTILATERAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.—It is further the sense of Congress that, in addition to the application of the sanctions described in subsection (c) to the Republic of Belarus (until the President determines and certifies to the appropriate congressional committees that the Government of Belarus has made significant progress in meeting the conditions described in subsection (b)), the Secretary of the Treasury should instruct the United States Executive Director of each international financial institution to which the United States is a member to use the voice and vote of the United States to oppose any extension by those institutions of any financial assistance (including any technical assistance or grant) of any kind to the Government of Belarus, except for loans and assistance that serve humanitarian needs.

SEC. 6. MULTILATERAL COOPERATION.

It is the sense of Congress that the President should continue to seek to coordinate with other countries, particularly European countries, a comprehensive, multilateral strategy to further the purposes of this Act, including, as appropriate, encouraging other countries to take measures with respect to the Republic of Belarus that are similar to measures described in this Act.

SEC. 7. REPORT.

(a) REPORT.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and not later than 1 year thereafter, the President shall transmit to the appropriate congressional committees a report that describes, with respect to the preceding 12-month period, and to the extent practicable the following:

(1) The sale or delivery of weapons or weapons-related technologies from the Republic of Belarus to any country, the government of which the Secretary of State has determined, for purposes of section 6(j)(1) of the Export Administration Act of 1979 (50 U.S.C. App. 2405(j)(1)), has repeatedly provided support for acts of international terrorism.

(2) An identification of each country described in paragraph (1) and a detailed description of the weapons or weapons-related technologies involved in the sale.

(3) An identification of the goods, services, credits, or other consideration received by Belarus in exchange for the weapons or weapons-related technologies.

(4) The personal assets and wealth of Aleksandr Lukashenko and other senior leadership of the Government of Belarus.

(b) FORM.—A report transmitted pursuant to subsection (a) shall be in unclassified form but may contain a classified annex.

SEC. 8. DECLARATION OF POLICY.

Congress hereby—

(1) calls upon the Lukashenko regime to cease its persecution of political opponents or independent journalists and to release those individuals who have been imprisoned for opposing his regime or for exercising their right to freedom of speech;

(2) expresses its grave concern about the disappearance of Victor Gonchar, Anatoly Krasovskiy, Yuri Zakharenko, and Dmitry Zavadsky and calls upon the Lukashenko regime to cooperate fully with the Belarussian civil initiative “We Remember” and to extend to this organization all necessary information to find out the truth about the disappearances;

(3) calls upon the the Lukashenko regime to cooperate fully with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) and its specially appointed representatives in matters regarding the resolution of the cases of the disappeared; and

(4) commends the democratic opposition in Belarus for their commitment to participate in October 2004 Parliamentary elections as a unified coalition and for their courage in the face of the repression of the Lukashenko regime in Belarus.

SEC. 9. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—The term “appropriate congressional committees” means the Committee on International Relations of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate.

(2) OSCE.—The term “OSCE” means the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

(3) SENIOR LEADERSHIP OF THE GOVERNMENT OF BELARUS.—The term “senior leadership of the Government of Belarus” includes—

(A) the President, Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Ministers, government ministers, Chairmen of State Committees, and members of the Presidential Administration of Belarus;

(B) any official of the Government of Belarus who is personally and substantially involved in the suppression of freedom in Belarus, including judges and prosecutors; and

(C) any other individual determined by the Secretary of State (or the Secretary’s designee) to be personally and substantially involved in the formulation or execution of the policies of the Lukashenko regime that are in contradiction of internationally recognized human rights standards.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. WEXLER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia. 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 H.R. 854.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Virginia?

There was no objection.

Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 854 and would like to commend the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) for his tireless efforts in sup-

port of democracy worldwide, and in this case in Belarus.

Belarus is perhaps the last country in Europe to embrace democracy. In just 2 weeks that nation will hold important elections for parliament in what will be a litmus test for President Lukashenko’s commitment to democracy and the direction he intends to take Belarus in the future. I regret that the political situation there at the moment does not look very promising.

In June, the House overwhelmingly passed H. Res. 624, introduced by our former colleague Doug Bereuter, which emphasizes that if Belarus is ever to become more integrated into the Western community of nations, it must work towards the establishment of a genuinely democratic political system in which the freedom of association and assembly are guaranteed, where political candidates from the opposition will be free from political harassment and intimidation as they campaign for office, and in which the media are free to act independently, free from government control or intimidation, where there exists a system in which elections and the electoral process are open, transparent and fair.

For all of these reasons, it was important that the Congress emphatically express our strong support for free, fair and transparent elections and more definitive progress towards establishing a functioning democracy in Belarus.

The bill we have before us today provides a mechanism by which we can influence that progress. H.R. 854 would authorize assistance for democracy promotion, for building strong democratic institutions, radio broadcasting, and the development of an independent media. But we know how the current government feels about these matters, and we anticipate a lack of cooperation. So the bill also provides a series of sanctions which could be implemented if certain conditions in Belarus are not adequately addressed or resolved.

I would also note that in Europe, the situation in Belarus is of equal concern. The OSCE, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe have all expressed deep concerns over Belarus and its elections.

H.R. 854 rather precisely explains the concerns and recommendations of the United States Congress, and I urge adoption of this important bill.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this bill.

Mr. Speaker, first I would like to commend my friend and colleague from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) for being a stalwart supporter of democracy in Belarus and for his willingness to offer this legislation.

Just a few months ago, this House passed an important resolution on the

upcoming parliamentary elections in Belarus. This resolution, authored by our former colleague Doug Bereuter and myself, called upon the Government of Belarus to ensure that these important elections be conducted in a free and fair manner. Regrettably, since then, the political situation in Belarus has deteriorated, not improved.

The dictatorial regime of Aleksandr Lukashenka continues to cling to power, using brutal force, intimidation, and illegal maneuvering to secure his reign. If Lukashenka succeeds, as he did in 1996 when he amended the constitution in a seriously flawed referendum, and as he did in 2001 when he extended his term in office through an election that was neither free nor fair, and as he did in 2003 when he similarly stole local elections, the United States Government must have a clear and effective strategy to promote human rights and democracy in Belarus.

Our legislation directs the President to focus our assistance on core democracy programs in Belarus, namely, promotion of free elections, support for civil society, strengthening of democratic political parties, and support for independent media and international exchanges. Lukashenka's regime must understand that we will not forget the cause of human rights and democracy in Belarus, and that the United States and Belarus will not have a fully normal relationship until Belarus moves assertively towards a democratic form of government.

Belarus is strategically located in Eastern Europe, bordering Poland and Lithuania, both members of NATO and the European Union, and Ukraine and Russia. We cannot afford to give up on the cause of democracy and freedom in Belarus.

The Lukashenka regime is one of the most notorious human rights abusers in the world, routinely suppressing the rights of Belarusian citizens. The regime has been implicated in the political murders of its opponents, disappearances of opposition leaders, repression of independent media, harassment of NGOs, and other egregious violations of internationally recognized and accepted democratic norms.

Lukashenka bears full responsibility for these abuses, as nothing in Belarus happens without his knowledge or full acquiescence. The United States, the European Union, member states of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and international human rights NGOs have all called upon the Lukashenka dictatorship to end its human rights abuses and restore democracy to Belarus.

Although the anti-Lukashenka forces in Belarus have boycotted previous elections, the opposition is participating in the upcoming elections and has united into a coalition of five democratic parties that will campaign as a block.

Although this coalition faces an uphill battle, we should nevertheless

commend the leaders and members of this coalition for their courage and determination to bring democracy to Belarus and provide them our unqualified support.

In the congressional tradition of setting policy that has been instrumental in defeating dictatorships in Europe, Asia, and Africa, this legislation will promote democracy, human rights, and the rule of law and consolidate the independence and sovereignty of Belarus.

I strongly support passage of this bill and urge my colleagues to do so as well.

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

Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend my colleague, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), the sponsor of this bill, who works tirelessly to promote democracy over in Europe; and I am sorry he is not here to speak on this bill.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I rise to urge passage of H.R. 854, the Belarus Democracy Act. With important parliamentary elections in Belarus scheduled for October 17, it is essential that we pass the Belarus Democracy Act. This Congress must demonstrate its strong support for pro-democracy forces in Belarus and advance U.S. interests in the region. Now is the time to send a strong signal.

Since his election in 1995, Belarusian dictator Alexander Lukashenka has steadily undermined democratic institutions through a series of unfair elections and a seriously flawed constitutional referendum. The U.S. State Department, Helsinki Commission which I Chair, as well as the OSCE, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the United Nations, the Council of Europe, the European Union and other international entities have all chronicled the appalling state of human rights and democracy there. Located in the heart of Europe, Belarus is juxtaposed to our NATO allies and will soon border the European Union.

The Lukashenka regime has repeatedly violated basic freedoms of speech, expression, assembly, association and religion. Since I introduced the Belarus Democracy Act last year, the situation in Belarus has only become more difficult.

Just within the last few months, the independent media, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), independent trade unions, religious groups, and democratic opposition leaders have faced increased harassment, arrest, detentions, and even violence. Opposition leaders have been imprisoned and beaten. NGOs have been closed down with increasing frequency. Independent media outlets continue to feel the wrath of the powers-that-be, including closures, defamation lawsuits, exorbitant fines, confiscations of newspapers or the suspension of their distribution, censorship and the deportation of an independent journalist from Ukraine who had lived in Belarus since 1990. Independent trade unions are subject to a pattern of obstruction, harassment and intimidation by the authorities.

In short, the situation in Belarus continues its downward spiral with daily reports of growing repression and human rights violations.

Here in Washington and at various OSCE Parliamentary Assembly meetings, I've had occasion to meet with the wives of the disappeared. The cases of their husbands—Yuri Zakharenka, Victor Gonchar, Anatoly Krasovsky, and journalist Dmitri Zavatsky who disappeared in 1999 and 2000 and are presumed to have been murdered—are a stark illustration of the climate of fear that pervades in Belarus. I am pleased that just last week the United States, together with the European Union, has decided to restrict admission to four top Belarusian officials implicated in these politically motivated disappearances. Reports of arms and weapons deals between the Belarusian regime and rogue states continue to circulate. Lukashenka and his regime were open in their support of Saddam Hussein. On August 24, the Treasury Department charged that Infobank of Belarus has been involved with money laundering involving fraudulent transactions pertaining to Iraq, where funds laundered by Saddam Hussein's regime were derived from schemes to circumvent the UN Oil-for-Food program.

PROVISIONS OF BDA

Mr. Speaker, the main purpose of the BDA is to demonstrate U.S. support for those struggling to promote democracy and respect for human rights in Belarus despite the onerous pressures they face from the anti-democratic regime. This bill authorizes necessary assistance for democracy-building activities such as support for NGOs, independent media—including radio and television broadcasting to Belarus—and international exchanges.

The bill also encourages free and fair parliamentary elections, conducted in a manner consistent with international standards—in sharp contrast to the 2000 parliamentary and 2001 presidential elections in Belarus which flaunted democratic standards. As a result of those elections, Belarus has the distinction of lacking legitimate presidential and parliamentary leadership, which contributes to its self-imposed isolation. Parliamentary elections now have an added dimension, with Lukashenka's September 7 announcement of a referendum to take place on the same day, that would pave the way to extend his rule beyond 2006, when his tenure is due to expire, to potentially join the ranks of "presidents for life" like President Niyazov in Turkmenistan and others in Central Asia.

As matters stand now, the deck appears to be stacked in Lukashenka's favor, as the Belarusian Government has almost total control of the electoral process. Opposition parties have been allocated a negligible percentage of seats on district and precinct election commissions, and many candidates proposed by Belarusian democratic opposition parties have been denied registration. To their credit, the embattled opposition and non-governmental organizations have not given up. I have met with the leaders of the Belarusian opposition and have been impressed with their determination to participate in the coming elections and their courageous work to advance democracy, human rights and the rule of law, despite all of the obstacles placed in their way by the Lukashenka regime.

In addition, this bill includes "sense of Congress" language that would impose sanctions against the Lukashenka regime. U.S. Government financing would be prohibited, except for

humanitarian goods and agricultural or medical products. The U.S. Executive Directors of the international financial institutions would be encouraged to vote against financial assistance to the Government of Belarus except for loans and assistance that serve humanitarian needs. This bill also requires reports from the President concerning the sale or delivery of weapons or weapons-related technologies from Belarus to rogue states and on the personal assets and wealth of Lukashenka and other senior leadership in Belarus.

I hope that the Belarus Democracy Act will help support those who desire a genuinely independent, democratic Belarus and serve as a catalyst to facilitate Belarus' integration into democratic Europe. The measure is designed to be a counterweight to the pattern of clear, gross and uncorrected human rights violations by the Lukashenka regime. The Belarusian people—who have suffered so much both under past and present dictatorships—deserve to live in a society where democratic principles and human rights are respected. We must stand firmly on the side of those who long for freedom.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my support for H.R. 854, the Belarus Democracy Act of 2003. This important piece of legislation will take significant steps toward the democratization of Belarus and offer support for those living in the country and seeking a democratic process in fundamental areas such as elections, media and human rights. If passed, this bill will ensure that a fair and free electoral process will exist in the former Soviet state. In addition, this bill will work toward the development of a media that is non-state controlled and independent. Furthermore, this bill will establish training programs and methods of international exchange for the individuals that will advance the development of a democratic and civil society.

By placing specific economic sanctions on Belarus, the United States will send a clear message that major democratic reforms must take place in order for the country to become an independent state that is integrated into Europe. I am in full support of H.R. 854, and I urge my fellow colleagues to vote in favor of this vital piece of legislation, which will go very far in assisting the democratization process in Belarus.

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I submit for the RECORD an exchange of letters concerning the bill H.R. 854 between the Chairman of the Committee on International Relations and the Chairman of the Committee on the Judiciary.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS,

Washington, DC, July 13, 2004.

Hon. F. JAMES SENSENBRENNER, JR.,
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your letter concerning H.R. 854, the "Belarus Democracy Act of 2003," which was referred primarily to the Committee on International Relations and additionally to the Committees on the Judiciary and Financial Services. This Committee ordered the bill reported favorably on February 25, 2004.

I concur that the referral to the Committee on the Judiciary was based on §5(c), a sense of Congress provision that the President should use his powers under the Immigration and Nationality Act to deny entry to the United States to the senior leadership of the Government of Belarus. The manager's

amendment which the Committee will call up does not include §5(c) or any other provisions that fall within the Rule X jurisdiction of the Committee on the Judiciary.

I appreciate your willingness to waive further consideration of the bill in the Committee on the Judiciary so that the bill may proceed expeditiously to the floor. I concur, that in taking this action, your Committee's jurisdiction over the bill is in no way diminished or altered. I will, as you request, include this exchange of letters in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD during consideration of the legislation on the House floor.

I appreciate your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

HENRY J. HYDE,
Chairman.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY,
Washington, DC, July 13, 2004.

Hon. HENRY HYDE,
Chairman, Committee on International Relations,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN HYDE: I am writing regarding H.R. 854, the "Belarus Democracy Act of 2003" which was referred primarily to the Committee on International Relations and additionally to the Committees on the Judiciary and Financial Services. The Committee on International Relations ordered the bill reported favorably on February 25, 2004, but as of this time has not filed a report.

The referral to the Committee on the Judiciary was based on §5(c), a sense of Congress provision that the President should use his powers under the Immigration and Nationality Act to deny entry to the United States to the senior leadership of the Government of Belarus. I understand that you have indicated your willingness to take the bill to the floor under suspension of the rules with a manager's amendment that does not include §5(c) or any other provisions that fall within the Rule X jurisdiction of the Committee on the Judiciary.

Based on your willingness to follow this course, I am willing to waive further consideration of the bill in the Committee on the Judiciary so that the bill may proceed expeditiously to the floor. The Committee on the Judiciary takes this action with the understanding that the Committee's jurisdiction over the bill is in no way diminished or altered. I would appreciate your including this letter and your response in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD during consideration of the legislation on the House floor.

I appreciate your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

F. JAMES SENSENBRENNER, JR.,
Chairman.

Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 854, 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.

□ 1945

COMMENDING PEOPLE AND GOVERNMENT OF GREECE FOR SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF 2004 SUMMER OLYMPIC GAMES

Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 774) commending the people and Government of Greece for the successful completion of the 2004 Summer Olympic Games.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 774

Whereas in August 2004, the Summer Olympic Games returned to Greece, their ancient birthplace and the land of the Acropolis, Homer, and Plato, reminding all of the origin of democracy;

Whereas the people and Government of Greece, through extraordinary diligence, energy, and imagination, hosted a successful 2004 Summer Olympic Games in Athens;

Whereas Greece demonstrated an extraordinary ability to accommodate more than 10,000 athletes from 202 countries, along with hundreds of thousands of spectators, foreign dignitaries, and journalists, and did so efficiently, securely, and with hospitality;

Whereas the 2004 Summer Olympic Games hosted by Greece proudly displayed the ideals of the Olympic movement, promoting mutual understanding, friendship, and peace among nations through noble athletic competition;

Whereas close cooperation between Greece and the United States on several aspects of the Olympic Games, including security, was consistent with the longtime friendship and alliance between two nations that have stood side by side in defense of a shared commitment to freedom and democracy for more than 100 years;

Whereas Greece provided the world with the unique experience of seeing the Olympics framed by ancient wonders such as the Parthenon on the Acropolis and the stadium in Olympia;

Whereas Greece displayed its modern achievements through extraordinary Olympic venues, world-class infrastructure, and breathtaking and high-tech opening and closing ceremonies; and

Whereas following completion of the games, United States Olympic Committee Chairman Peter Ueberroth stated that "history will record these Games as among the greatest, if not the greatest, of all time": Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) commends the people of Greece for the successful completion of the 2004 Summer Olympic Games; and

(2) agrees with United States Olympic Committee Chairman Peter Ueberroth that "history will record these Games as among the greatest, if not the greatest, of all time".

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MURPHY). Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. WEXLER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend