

Accordingly (at 7 p.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

□ 2245

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BASS) at 10 o'clock and 45 minutes p.m.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, July 28, 2005.

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

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on July 28, 2005 at 8:45 pm: That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 3045.

With best wishes, I am
Sincerely,

JEFF TRANDAHL,
Clerk of the House.

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION EXTENSION ACT OF 2005, PART VI

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, the Committee on Science, the Committee on Ways and Means, and the Committee on Resources be discharged from further consideration of the bill (H.R. 3512) to provide an extension of administrative expenses for highway, highway safety, motor carrier safety, transit, and other programs funded out of the Highway Trust Fund pending enactment of a law reauthorizing the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, is this the legislation extending time for the transportation bill?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Yes, it is.

Mr. SHAYS. Then, Mr. Speaker, reserving my right to object, I yield to the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG).

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, this is a very simple extension which is necessary once we pass H.R. 3 to give time for an enrollment and delivering the package to the Senate, which we hope to do tonight, and then after being enrolled on to the President, and that will take some time.

If we do not do this, the Federal Government and the transportation system

will be shut down. This has been requested by the administration and by the other body.

Mr. SHAYS. Further reserving the right to object, Mr. Speaker, I would love to have a dialogue with the gentleman bringing out the bill, but first will express my reservation of objection.

In the full bill that we will be considering, there is a section 1942 entitled Opening of Airfield at Malmstrom Air Force Base, Montana. It reads: "Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Air Force shall, (1) open the Air Field At Malmstrom Air Force Base, Montana; and (2) enable flying operations for all fixed-wing aircraft at that base."

My objection is that I understand this resolution extension will only go until August 14. That means that the President is forced to sign the bill, the ultimate bill that we pass, even if he has objections to the bill. I have deep concern that we are basically forcing the President to agree to an act that will reopen a base closed under BRAC without any options.

And if the President does the right thing, which would be to veto this bill so that stuff like this is not made into law, then our government transportation shuts down. My reservation is that the extension is not long enough.

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. SHAYS. I yield to the gentleman from Alaska.

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. May I remind the gentleman, Mr. Speaker, that this was asked for by the administration. This was the length that they wanted to have it, 14 days. To in fact have this extension any longer has not been requested by the administration, and I believe this can do the job. The President has to make the decision. If he wishes to veto the bill, he can do so.

But this has been a request by the administration. This is the eleventh extension we have had on this legislation, and I will be right up front with everybody that I think it is the last one we should be doing. This is very important to the States themselves.

The President will make that decision on the merits of the gentleman's argument, and I understand those merits. I will not disagree with what he said. I am just suggesting respectfully that this is action for the bill itself and for the rule. But for the extension, this has been a request made by the administration, by the other body, and of course the leadership of this House.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I would like to ask the gentleman, and will yield to him for a response to this question: Does the President know that in this transportation bill there is legislation language that will undo a BRAC closing? Is he aware that this language is in this?

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. If the gentleman will continue to yield, I am confident that the President of the

Senate has communicated with the White House. All through this process they have been very much involved in the process of passage of this legislation. I have not asked his opinion on that part of the legislation. I know that this is a request, and I am trying to fulfill that request.

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

Mr. SHAYS. I would be happy to yield to the gentleman from Minnesota.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, this item which the gentleman has raised was an item requested by Senate conferees on which Senate conferees voted and asked us to consider. We were not aware at the time that it was a BRAC item. We learned about it subsequently.

Our review of the matter reveals that one runway at the Air Force base was closed; the other runway is active and still operating as a military facility. This language would simply keep the other one runway operating for a variety of purposes, multiuse purposes, at the airport.

Mr. SHAYS. Reclaiming my time, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to confide with my colleague that I am told that this is language that will basically reopen a base that was closed under BRAC, and that while the gentleman is under the interpretation he is under, there are many of us who believe it is quite different. While I greatly respect the gentleman, it seems to me this House of Representatives has to someday stand up to the Senate when they do this kind of stuff, sir.

What we are seeing here is absolutely outrageous, and what would have been a preferred extension, in my judgment, would be to have allowed the President such time that he could have had an extension until he signed this legislation. And if he did not sign this legislation, we could have come back and corrected this.

I am hopeful that before the night is out that we are going to delete section 1942. I do not know how it is going to happen, but, Lord knows, if it does not, we have basically done something that I think is shameful to the process and reflects badly not just on the Senate, but on the House that we would allow them.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will continue to yield, I concur in the gentleman's feelings about this matter. It should not have been an item in a conference report on a transportation bill of this magnitude, but as we all know, these things make their way in. We did not have full information.

Our information subsequently is that the base was not closed, but that one runway was shut down, and this language was to open that one runway. There will be a further opportunity in a technical correction to address the concerns of the gentleman from Connecticut, and I am confident that the

chairman will further consult on the matter.

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

Mr. SHAYS. Further reserving the right to object, I yield to the gentleman from Kansas.

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, the concept of a BRAC, the Base Realignment Commission, is to remove the political process from the closure of bases in order to get us to the type of military that we need to meet today's demands to fight terrorism around the globe. And if we insert our will from another body, the Senate, into this bill, it will jeopardize that process. I do not think any of us want that here on the floor.

If we cannot relieve that dissension among our ranks on this bill, it will not pass on the floor tonight. We all would like to see this happen, because as the gentleman from Alaska has expressed, we need this bill. We need this to occur within each of our States. We need to build highways. We need the infrastructure for our economy. But if this provision is inserted, it will go beyond the concept of BRAC and take the political process out of getting the proper size and scope of our military.

So I hope that whatever provision we have within this rule will alleviate these provisions, because if they are not, the bill will not pass. I think there will be enough dissent on both sides of this great institution, on the floor, in the House, the Republicans and the Democrats, to keep this from passing.

So I hope we can correct this measure within the rule, because if not, I think we will have a failed bill. And that will not be good for this country or for the efforts that we have here tonight.

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

Mr. SHAYS. I yield to the gentleman from Oregon.

Mr. DEFAZIO. I would like to try to put this in perspective. I agree with the gentleman it is egregious this is in the bill. We had a very difficult negotiation with the Senate. This was snuck in. It is not like we are reopening a base, repositioning forces and/or equipment. We are talking about a runway.

The question is, will they, in the next month, until we can have a technical correction bill, have to run out and pull the weeds and repaint the lines on the runway? This is not exactly a major part of the BRAC process.

To forestall the passage of a bill which is almost 2 years overdue, which invests \$286.4 billion in America's infrastructure, because there might be some weeds pulled on a runway in the interim, I agree it is offensive, but we can fix it and challenge the Senate at a later date. But to hold up the entire bill and forestall the investment, there are States who are waiting today and who will spend money under this bill and commit money under this bill this construction season, putting thousands of people to work and making needed investments in America.

Mr. SHAYS. Reclaiming my time, Mr. Speaker, the gentleman is making a case well beyond this issue.

I would like to ask the gentleman a question, and would be happy to yield to him to respond. It was my understanding that this provision of 60 days had been shorter, and somehow people felt that by extending to 60 days, they had solved the objection to this bill. Is it true that when this bill came out of conference, it was less than 60 days?

Mr. DEFAZIO. I am not sure what provision the gentleman is talking about.

Mr. SHAYS. Does the gentleman know the provision I am talking about? It says, "Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Air Force shall open the air field at Malmstrom Air Force Base, Montana." Open it.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Right. It would reopen a runway.

Mr. SHAYS. "And enable flying operations for all fixed-wing aircraft at that base." It is opening a base. Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to make a closing comment, and if I am not allowed to, I would object. And my closing comment is this. This is to open a base that was closed. This 60 days was added as a sop to the House, in my judgment, with all due respect, to somehow allow everybody to save face. We are not in session for all 60 days.

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my unanimous consent request at this time to consult with the Senate and see if we cannot resolve this problem.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Unanimous consent is not required. The request is withdrawn.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 58 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

□ 0015

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BASS) at 12 o'clock and 15 minutes a.m.

CORRECTING ENROLLMENT OF H.R. 3, SAFE, ACCOUNTABLE, FLEXIBLE, EFFICIENT TRANSPORTATION EQUITY ACT: A LEGACY FOR USERS

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I offer a concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 226) providing for a correction to the enrollment of H.R. 3, and ask unanimous consent for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

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

There was no objection.

The Clerk read the concurrent resolution, as follows:

H. CON. RES. 226

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That, in the enrollment of the bill H.R. 3, the Clerk of the House of Representatives shall make the following correction: Strike section 1942 and the item relating to such section in the table of contents.

The concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

(Mr. DELAY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, for the sake of communicating to the Members the situation we are in, I want to first say that I greatly appreciate the cooperation of all colleagues on both sides of the aisle. I appreciate the cooperation and work of the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR) and the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) and the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. PETRI). We greatly appreciate the institution standing together and trying to make corrections that need to be made in this bill. I appreciate the hour and everybody coming together and working together for the purpose of fixing this bill.

We will not be able to fix the bill tonight. We hope to come back at 9 a.m. in the morning and continue work on this very important highway bill. We hope to finish it as early as we can tomorrow. My message to the Members is go home, get a good night's sleep, and we will be back in the morning to finish the work of the House.

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

Mr. DELAY. I yield to the gentleman from Minnesota.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I want to express my appreciation for the kind words of the majority leader and to assure Members the issue before us is not a matter of division within the committee or between the parties of the House, but a difference or interpretation of a provision in the conference report in language that was included by a Member of the other body.

Our expectation is we will be able to resolve that matter of a limited scope and pass the broader bill which is of great importance to the whole Nation. I appreciate the support, cooperation, and participation of the majority leader, and the support of the Parliamentarian's Office in helping us bring this to a resolution.

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman's words.