

recommit H.R. 3963, and "yea" on roll call No. 1009, final passage of H.R. 3963, the Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I erroneously cast my vote against H.R. 505, the Native Hawaiian Government Reorganization Act. Please let the written record show that I intended to vote "aye" on roll call vote number 1000.

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

(Mr. BLUNT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Speaker, I yield to my friend from Maryland, the majority leader, for information about the schedule next week.

Mr. HOYER. I thank my friend for yielding.

On Monday, the House will meet at 12:30 p.m. for morning-hour business and 2 p.m. for legislative business, with votes rolled until 6:30 p.m. We will consider several bills under suspension of the rules. A list of those bills will be announced by the end of business tomorrow.

On Tuesday, the House will meet at 9 a.m. for morning-hour business and 10 a.m. for legislative business. On Wednesday and Thursday, the House will meet at 10 a.m. for legislative business. We expect to consider H.R. 3867, the Small Business Contracting Improvements Act; H.R. 2262, the Hardrock Mining and Reclamation Act; and H.R. 3920, the Trade and Globalization Assistance Act. On Friday, there will be no votes, as I announced earlier today.

Mr. BLUNT. I thank the gentleman for the information. Two bills we thought we might deal with this week I notice are still not on the schedule: the Employment Non-Discrimination Act and the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. I wonder if my friend has any information about either of those bills?

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for the question, and I will tell him that both of those bills are under consideration for addition to the calendar. They have not been added at this point in time, but they are both possibilities.

Mr. BLUNT. I thank you for that. On the question I have asked now for the last few weeks about conferences on appropriations bills, I believe 1987 was the last year that the Congress hadn't passed a single appropriations bill by this time in October 1987, particularly on the Military Quality of Life bill that has been ready for some time. I am wondering if there is any chance that we could go to conference on that bill or any other appropriations bill in the near future.

Mr. HOYER. We passed the Military Construction bill here handily through the House. It has passed the Senate. We want to get a conference finished. We

know the staff is working on that. We hope to go to conference very soon. We certainly want to pass that bill in the near term, and other appropriations bills are being pre-conferenced as well as getting ready to go to conference.

I say to the gentleman, as you know, we passed bills here in a relatively timely fashion, all by August, and I want to see those bills moved and sent to the President. We hope to do that as soon as we can. We are working on it.

Mr. BLUNT. I am pretty familiar with that equation, where the House passes its bills and then we don't have the bills done. I don't recall ever getting a lot of credit for that, but I will suggest I appreciate the gentleman's position, and I appreciate the fact the House got its bills done.

It still has been 20 years since we failed to get any bills done by October 25. Of these bills that are ready, I do hope we can figure out a way to move them, again, particularly on the Military Quality of Life bill for veterans and for the families of people serving today, and for military retirees. I think it's about \$18.5 million a day of additional benefits that could have been going as of October 1, and I know I brought this up before, I don't mean to be offensive about it, but I really strongly feel that this is a bill that we could get on the President's desk and get started quickly.

Mr. HOYER. We want to pass that bill. The bill that passed out of the House is the best bill that's passed out of the House for veterans since 77 years ago when the Veterans' Administration was formed. We are very proud of that bill. It had overwhelming bipartisan support. We think it is an excellent bill. We want to see it signed by the President.

I will observe, though, Mr. BLUNT, that I can't remember a time that I have served here over the last 26 years where a President said, if you are not exactly at my number, I will veto all of your bills. That has put a real crimp in the appropriations process of trying to figure out how to get this process done on bills that, for the most part, have been very strongly supported.

In the Senate, there hasn't been under, I think, 71 votes or 72 votes for any of the appropriations bills they have passed. We have had an average of 285 votes for the bills we have passed, some less, some more, so that the Congress has passed its bills and with relative ease that it's considered on the floor, but the President continues to say he is going to veto bills if we go anything over what he has told us to do.

Very frankly, we think under article I of the Constitution, it's our prerogative to fund the priorities that we believe are important for our country. We have done that, and we are hopeful. I have had discussions with the White House about the possibility of compromise. Mr. OBEY has had conversations, and we do not have compromise yet on that position. So I tell my

friend that that has made it somewhat more difficult for us to do.

If it's unprecedented that we haven't passed one before October, I tell the gentleman, without having checked the records, I can't remember a President, certainly not this President, ever saying that to previous Congresses, which, by the way, as you know, for at least 4 years cut defense spending below what the President asked for and increased domestic spending above what he asked for. We have not done that. As a matter of fact, we have enhanced the President's request on the Defense appropriation bill, as you know, for MRAPs and for Afghanistan and for other items that we thought were necessary. So we are over the President's number.

□ 1715

But we're working on it. We hope to get those to the President as soon as possible, and we're certainly hopeful that he will sign the bills that we send him.

Thank you for yielding.

Mr. BLUNT. I thank the gentleman for that. Again, I'd suggest on the Military Quality of Life bill, I think the President said he's ready to sign that bill, even though it exceeds his request. And of course it would drive the average up dramatically of the passage of the other bill, since every Member of the House voted for it. But the other bills did get bipartisan support at some level. I do understand that.

I also understand that I think all the other bills, but one, probably had enough people voting against them to sustain a veto. But as the actions today would have been evidence of, the very fact the President says he's going to veto is not the ultimate impediment to us getting our work done and challenging him with that.

One of the announcements you made today was on the Trade Adjustment Assistance Act. I wonder, could we begin to expect a vote then on the Peru Free Trade Agreement after Trade Adjustment Assistance is on the floor next week?

Mr. HOYER. It is my hope and expectation that we will schedule Peru for the week of the 5th, the vote on the Peru Trade Agreement the week of the 5th, which would be not next week, but the week after.

Mr. BLUNT. But the following week, the week after we do Trade Adjustment Assistance is what the gentleman is saying.

Mr. HOYER. Yes.

Mr. BLUNT. I appreciate that.

On the calendar generally, I actually received a document this week that one of your chairmen had sent around town that suggested, actually it didn't suggest, it said here's going to be the schedule for December. I wonder if that's accurate, or if the gentleman could share his plans for December, if we are in, this would be assuming, my friend, that we haven't finished our work yet on November 16, we'll be working in December. Are we to the

point yet, as this chairman suggested we were, that there is a rough Members' outline of how you could schedule other activities if we're still working in December?

Mr. HOYER. I don't know the paper to which you refer. However, I know what I've told the chairmen so I would be glad to relate it to our Members for their planning purposes.

The Senate decided to be out the last 2 weeks of November, obviously the last week being Thanksgiving or I guess it's the next to last week being Thanksgiving, and we will be out that week because the Senate won't be in. And frankly, after the 16th, what I've told the committee chairmen is that the only business that I will schedule time for will be the finishing of business that we've already initiated and that we are getting back from the Senate, whether it's appropriations bills or other conference reports on authorization bills, Energy being one. We might be able to do that prior to the 16th. But if not, Energy would certainly be one of those bills. There would be others that would fall in that category, but there would be no initiated legislation out of the House after the 16th of November.

I have then told Members, as you refer to, and the chairman has referred to, that it will be my intention in December to schedule us the first Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, that's the 4th, 5th and 6th of December. And then, if necessary, Members ought to keep their calendars flexible for the Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday of the next week.

Now, the Speaker and I both have talked to the leader in the Senate, hopeful that by the 6th of December we can finish our business. But, as you well know, and I'm more empathetic with your pain every day that you experienced, we need to make plans for contingencies because we meet contingencies on a regular basis. So that's the second week.

But the point, for planning, is that I do not intend to schedule Mondays or Fridays in December.

Mr. BLUNT. Okay. That's very helpful.

I know our planned adjournment day was tomorrow, and we've known for some time we wouldn't make that; but I believe your information here is very helpful, that Members, if we are working in December, those first two weeks, would anticipate that Monday and Friday of those two weeks would not likely be scheduled work days, and they could schedule other things in their districts.

Mr. HOYER. The gentleman is correct. Obviously, there are contingencies on which, particularly I think a Friday, not so much on a Monday, on a Friday. We have not yet decided when, for instance, if we need a CR, as is quite likely, when that CR will end. And, obviously, we're not going to, we have no intention, and I know I talked to the President, the President has no

intention of shutting down the government. So we need some flexibility for those days for that contingency. We have no intention of being certainly at home and having the government shut down. We need to reach accommodation on that.

But, generally speaking, those would be the six days that I want to have us try to be available. The first three I'm sure we're going to be here. The second three I hope we're not here, but I don't want Members to schedule themselves.

I might make one additional announcement that might be helpful to Members. We have decided that we will be coming back after the Christmas/New Year's break on the 15th of January; that's a Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. on the 15th.

Mr. BLUNT. I thank the gentleman. That's very helpful information for our Members on the time we will be working and the information for next week. And I yield back.

ADJOURNMENT TO MONDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2007

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 12:30 p.m. on Monday next for morning-hour debate.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MITCHELL). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Maryland? There was no objection.

DISPENSING WITH CALENDAR WEDNESDAY BUSINESS ON WEDNESDAY NEXT

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the business in order under the Calendar Wednesday rule be dispensed with on Wednesday next.

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

There was no objection.

THIS IS DAY 25

(Mrs. DRAKE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. DRAKE. Mr. Speaker, this is day 25. That is 25 days, so far, that our veterans have not had the use of the increased funding for their benefits and health care. That is \$18.5 million a day not able to be used. And why? Because the Democratic leadership has decided to not complete this bill and send it to the President, who has agreed to sign it.

In June this House passed this appropriation bill with a \$6 billion increase in a bipartisan manner. We were proud of our work and grateful to our veterans.

On September 6, the Senate completed their bill.

This work is done. Our veterans are not pawns in a political game. They are heroes.

America expects us to get the job done. America expects us to provide the best care to our veterans.

Please join me in calling upon the Democratic leadership to put our veterans first and send this bill to the President now.

PERSECUTION OF JOURNALISTS IN MEXICO

(Mr. POE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, the people in Mexico are expected to remain silent to the corruption and despicable acts among the rich and powerful. Sort of the philosophy: Sin ain't sin as long as good folk do it.

Lydia Cacho refused to remain silent, and for that she fears for her life, has been arrested, verbally abused, imprisoned, and sued.

Lydia Cacho, founder and director of a shelter for sexual assault victims in Cancun, wrote a book, "The Demons of Eden." In it, she exposed and named the rich and powerful who lured poor young girls to millionaire Cancun businessman Jean Succar Kuri's home so he and his friends could have sex with them.

Powerful politicians and businessmen had Cacho jailed for her work. Without explanation, state police whisked her away in the darkness of the night to a prison 900 miles away. So much for freedom of the press in Mexico.

Lydia Cacho is one of several journalists that have been persecuted for articles about corruption in high places in Mexico. Lydia Cacho became a political prisoner of the rich, famous, and powerful of Mexico. Accusations against her should be dismissed, and the child sex offenders should go to jail.

And that's just the way it is.

IT CAME TO PASS

(Mr. GOHMERT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, there's a phrase that's used in the Bible a number of times: "It came to pass." That really struck me this weekend.

You know, the Republican majority, it came and it passed. The Democratic majority, it came and it will pass. So that needs to be thought about in these unprecedented procedural rules that shut out so much of America from having representation.

You have a Rules Committee that says, we'll not allow any amendments. Now put on your evidence about your amendments.

We have a majority leader that came to the floor and said, we reached out to the other side. I had a meeting this morning about SCHIP.

The bill was put on display at 7:30; we didn't even get a copy. You have to come and look at the copy.

It came to pass. I don't know how long the majority of the Democrats