



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 110th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 153

WASHINGTON, MONDAY, JUNE 18, 2007

No. 98

House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. HIRONO).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
June 18, 2007.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MAZIE K. HIRONO to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 30 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to not to exceed 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS) for 5 minutes.

REGRETTABLE REMITTANCES

Mr. STEARNS. Madam Speaker, the immigration problem has been a topic of contentious debate for years now, with few results. The influx, both legal and illegal, of immigrants from Mexico to North America numbers at a minimum about 500,000 people a year. It is clear that the majority of these immigrants are coming to our country for the better wages to provide for their families. And this is the heart of the problem. The Mexican economy is continually stunted in its growth by fiscal

mismanagement, corruption, and a perpetual dependence upon foreign aid and remittances. Mexico must make tough decisions and get its economy in shape. Until then, Madam Speaker, we will continue to face massive immigration from the south.

While we are painfully aware of the problems illegal immigration is causing our society, consider what it is doing to Mexico in the long run. The massive immigration is draining many villages across Mexico of their important labor pool. Families are separated while the husbands and fathers choose to cross our borders to get better lives for themselves and for their families. Mexico is slow in reforming their economic policies, in part perhaps because of the influx of money from the remittances from the United States that enables them to continue their unhealthy policies.

Let me explain. The money sent in the form of remittances amounted to about \$23 billion in 2006, according to the Bank of Mexico, the country's central bank. That amount is up almost sevenfold in a dozen years. As that number has grown, the fee for remitting money has dropped from an average of about 9.2 percent in 1999 to just about 3 percent this year, according to Bancomer, a Mexican bank.

Sending money back to Mexico has become cheaper partly because the amounts have become bigger. It was about \$290 on average 8 years ago, and now is up to over \$350. More importantly, according to the Bank of Mexico, over 90 percent of remittances are now sent by electronic wire transfer compared with only 50 percent in 1995. In rural poor communities in Mexico, even the 3 percent transaction fee is a huge chunk cut out of a remittance check. That is why the Bank of Mexico and America's Federal Reserve are running a program called Directo a Mexico, or FedACH International Mexico Service, to cut the cost further for these folks.

In this program, people receive an overnight transfer from an American bank account to a Mexican one. The two central banks act as middlemen, taking a cut of about 67 cents no matter what the size of the transaction. According to Elizabeth McQuerry of the Federal Reserve, banks then typically charge \$2.50 to \$5 to transfer about \$350. In total, this new program cuts the costs of remittances by at least half. In America, 200 banks are now signed up for this service compared with just six that signed up when it was initiated in 2004. So far, the program is just beginning, handling about 27,000 transactions a month. However, another point of serious concern is that about 26,000 of which are Social Security payments made by the American government to beneficiaries in Mexico.

One kink in the program was that most of Mexico's poor, who are often the intended recipients of the funds, do not have bank accounts to pay them into. So to ensure that these funds can still get to Mexico, they developed another program, run by Bansefi, a Mexican government bank, that allows people in America to open bank accounts for their relatives in Mexico. Their relatives can then use these accounts to withdraw the money deposited through the remittance program.

Madam Speaker, another question is, do the legal and illegal immigrants themselves have accounts to send money from? Statistics indicate as many as 70 percent do, according to a recent report by the Bank of Mexico. This is largely because hundreds of American banks, eager for deposits, will happily open accounts for people carrying only a Mexican consular identity card, rather than requiring official United States Government identification. This allows people without officially sanctioned rights to be in this country to send money out of it. As a result, the Mexican bank has seen rapid growth, with 3.4 million accounts

This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



Printed on recycled paper.

now open, compared to just 850,000 in the year 2001.

If this trend continues, Madam Speaker, it will enable the Mexican government to continue to operate as it is today. Their economy will continue to stagnate, immigration will continue to bleed across our border, and the Mexican people will be caught in a downward spiral for generations to come.

Obviously another part of any immigration reform is making sure that U.S. banks only open accounts for persons who have legally sanctioned rights to be in this country and not illegal aliens.

HONORING LIEUTENANT GENERAL KEVIN J. SULLIVAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the gentleman from Utah (Mr. BISHOP) is recognized during morning-hour debate for 5 minutes.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Madam Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I stand to honor Lieutenant General Kevin J. Sullivan upon his promotion to Air Force Deputy Chief of Staff for Installations and Logistics.

Kevin Sullivan was born in Bridgeport, Connecticut, and grew up in an Air Force family. He married the former June Young, also from Connecticut. He is an alumnus of the University of Connecticut, and he and June are Husky fans through and through.

General Sullivan entered the Air Force and was commissioned through the Air Force ROTC program upon graduation. His first assignment took him in 1975 to England Air Force Base, Louisiana, as a weapons loading officer. He has since had assignments in the Philippines, North Dakota, Nebraska, here in Washington, Alabama, Germany, Utah, Ohio, Florida, and most recently a return engagement to Hill Air Force Base as Commander of the Ogden Air Logistics Center.

General Sullivan is the longest serving commander in the history of the Ogden ALC and he has led with superb application of financial, human and material resources during his tenure.

Despite living the itinerant life that is part and parcel of the Air Force, and despite his affection and affinity to his alma mater, we consider Kevin and June to be true Utahns, and we look forward to their future visits, official and not-so-official.

General Sullivan, please accept my heartfelt thanks for your outstanding leadership and stewardship at Hill Air Force Base during the past 4 years and my very best wishes upon your important new assignment. You exemplify the tradition of “Integrity first, Service before self, and Excellence in all we do” that is the hallmark of the United States Air Force.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair

declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 38 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CARDOZA) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

Great Creator and Ruler of the universe, every creature of Yours quickens to a new day. Each in proper order gives You glory simply by its being. Every plant, animal and element lives according to its own unique pattern of life as beautiful, irregular or routine as that may be.

Only we, as Your people, with minds and hearts can spontaneously and consciously give You praise and thanks.

Outside our moments of prayer, we become focused on primal responsibilities. In doing so, Lord, we continue to give You glory by simply performing our work with dedication and whole-hearted effort, by following Your holy inspiration and by keeping Your commands. Empower us with Your spirit, that we may fulfill Your law today, always trusting in Your promises.

To Your holy name be all honor and praise, forever and ever. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. POE led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER MEMORIAL COMMISSION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to 16 U.S.C. 431 note, and the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the Chair announces the Speaker's appointment of the following Members of the House to the Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial Commission:

Mr. MOORE, Kansas

Mr. BOSWELL, Iowa

Mr. THORNBERRY, Texas

Mr. MORAN, Kansas

IT'S STILL A BAD DEAL

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, the “Grand Bargain” is what people are calling the new inclusive, comprehensive give-America-away immigration bill. Since it got nowhere in the Senate last week, Senators have returned to the back room and behind closed doors to come up with a “Greater Grand Bargain” than before. In other words, throw in something for the left, more family reunification for illegals, and something for the right, more border security promises, and this all done in an effort to get a deal, any deal, passed quickly. Of course, the underlying principle of this deal is if you are here illegally, you're going to get to stay.

Now, smart people on the left and the right say this is not amnesty. Of course they say it's not amnesty because these smart people know Americans are overwhelmingly opposed to amnesty. So they call it a reform.

Mr. Speaker, if 12 to 20 million people are on our land illegally, and shall I speak politically incorrect and call it trespassing, and if they pay some kick-back fees to Uncle Sam but get to stay on our land, it's still amnesty.

So let's be honest. The new “Greater Grand Bargain” is a bargain for illegals, but a costly, bad deal for Americans.

And that's just the way it is.

RECOGNIZING ADMIRAL EDMUND GIAMBASTIANI

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, in the coming months, the United States Navy will lose one of its greatest leaders. ADM Edmund P. Giambastiani, Jr., will retire as vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in August of this year. Admiral Giambastiani has held this post since August 2005.

A native of Canastota, New York, Admiral Giambastiani graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy with leadership distinction in 1970. Admiral Giambastiani and his wife, Cindy, have two children, Pete and Cathy.

We are grateful to work closely with Pete, who serves as military legislative assistant to Congressman JEFF MILLER of Florida. Pete, an academy graduate and lieutenant in the Navy, followed proudly in his father's footsteps.

I appreciate Admiral Giambastiani, his family, and their service to the people of the United States.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September 11.