

□ 1745

The purpose of H.R. 5778 is to codify in Federal statute the Water and Sewerage Authority's financial independence from the District.

And with that, Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, we have no further requests for time and no further speakers.

I want to thank the gentleman from Indiana for his support and thank the entire committee for its support. I urge passage of this resolution.

Mr. DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 5778, the District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority Independence Preservation Act. Representative VAN HOLLEN and I introduced this legislation to reaffirm the independence of the District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority.

H.R. 5778 would amend the D.C. Home Rule Act to clarify that the District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority, or WASA, is an independent agency with financial authority independent from the District of Columbia. After all, WASA is a regional entity, funded by ratepayers living in D.C., Maryland and Virginia.

In October 2000, Congress approved the conference report for the FY2001 District of Columbia appropriations, which contained language regarding the functions and responsibilities of the District of Columbia Chief Financial Officer.

At that time, I engaged in a colloquy on the floor with then Chairman of the District of Columbia Appropriations Subcommittee Ernest Istook to clarify that the amendments to the CFO's responsibility's did not infringe upon the financial independence of the District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority. Subsequently, a memorandum of understanding was signed between WASA and the District's CFO at the time Anthony Williams stating that the CFO would not exercise its authority over WASA.

However, it was recently determined that such a memorandum was not legally enforceable and that Federal law needed to be changed in order to make the previous agreement enforceable.

Therefore, the purpose of H.R. 5778 is to codify in Federal statute the Water and Sewer Authority's financial independence from the District.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support passage of this legislation.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5778, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

REFORM OF MUTUAL AID AGREEMENTS FOR THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the

Senate bill (S. 1245) to reform mutual aid agreements for the National Capital Region.

The Clerk read the title of the Senate bill.

The text of the Senate bill is as follows:

S. 1245

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. REFORM OF MUTUAL AID AGREEMENTS FOR THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION.

Section 7302 of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 (42 U.S.C. 5196 note) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (4), by striking “, including its agents or authorized volunteers,”; and

(B) in paragraph (5), by striking “or town” and all that follows and inserting “town, or other governmental agency, governmental authority, or governmental institution with the power to sue or be sued in its own name, within the National Capital Region.”;

(2) in subsection (b)(1), in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking “, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority, and any other governmental agency or authority”; and

(3) in subsection (d), by striking “or employees” each place that term appears and inserting “, employees, or agents”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) and the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, as a member of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, I join my colleagues in the consideration of S. 1245, which will make some minor but much needed changes to the mutual aid agreements authorized by the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 for the governments of the National Capital Region.

S. 1249 was received by the House on December 13, 2007 after being passed under unanimous consent by the Senate. The measure is authored by Senator BEN CARDIN of Maryland and is supported by the members of the National Capital Region, which includes the District of Columbia and surrounding local jurisdictions in Maryland and Virginia that are also part of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments. The legislative changes enacted by this measure are also backed by the State of Maryland and the Commonwealth of Virginia.

S. 1249 addresses and authorizes changes to two aspects of the original legislation. For starters, the measure adds a special purpose governmental authority category to be included as part of the area's mutual aid agreement. This newly created category will permit such entities as the Metropolitan Washington Airport Authority, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority and the District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority to participate in the mutual aid agreement during the event of an emergency.

Secondly, S. 1245 grants the regional members of the mutual aid agreement additional flexibility in developing an exhaustive list of employees and authorized volunteers who will be committed to respond to a disaster on behalf of the various independent authorities and State or local governments.

Instead of having to keep a running tally of each individual employee or person participating in the agreement, S. 1245 will allow each of the over-arching authorities to keep track of their own participants. This bill authorizes the former inclusion of volunteer entities, such as incorporated volunteer fire companies, to be covered under the mutual aid agreement.

So Mr. Speaker, since it is vitally important that we in the National Capital Region are prepared and ready to respond in the event of a major emergency or disaster, it is incumbent upon us that we pass S. 1245.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this measure.

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

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on S. 1245, legislation to reform mutual aid agreements for the National Capital Region.

This legislation was introduced by Senators CARDIN, WARNER, MIKULSKI, and WEBB last July and passed by the Senate in December by unanimous consent.

Under current law, the Federal Government is authorized to enter into mutual aid agreements with State and local governments in the National Capital Region in order to allow the various jurisdictions to cooperate in the event of an emergency without risk of liability for the acts or omissions of their employees while rendering aid.

Senate bill 1245 would further state that entities such as the Metropolitan Washington Airport Authority, the Water and Sewer Authority and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority would be authorized to enter into these mutual aid agreements as well.

The goal here is to ensure that emergency response personnel in the National Capital Region are able to coordinate as closely as possible in the event of an emergency. Hopefully this legislation helps us to move closer in that direction.

And before I yield back my time, since I've covered that subject, I just

want to say to my colleagues on the other side, for whom I have the greatest respect, tomorrow morning, when you get up and you get out of bed and you go to the office here on Capitol Hill, stop by one of the gas stations on the way in and watch some people pumping gas at \$4 plus per gallon. And just walk up to them—and you don't need to tell them you're a Congressman or a Senator or anything else, just walk up to them and say, what do you think about the gas prices? And they're going to say, they're horrible; Congress has to do something about it. And then say, would you object if we drilled in the ANWR to get oil to reduce your gasoline prices? Would you object if we drilled off the Continental Shelf to get another couple million barrels of oil a day to reduce your gas prices and your energy costs? Would you object if we drilled in some of the forests that we have, national forests where we could get 400 or 500 years of natural gas out? Would you object to that? Would you object if we considered more nuclear reactors to produce electricity for this country so we can lower the price of energy and, in effect, end up lowering the price of gasoline and other fuel products as well? You know what they're going to say? They're going to say what the national polls have already shown; 80 percent plus are for drilling and getting oil out of our country and our resources out of the ground. That's what the American people want.

I want to point out one more thing, because I respect all my colleagues on the other side of the aisle. When you first took over the Congress 2 years ago, one of the things that was said by you and Speaker PELOSI was that we were going to do something about the energy crisis and we were going to stem the tide to the growth in the cost of fuel, gasoline, and other energy products. Now it's gone up over 50 percent. It's now \$4 plus. And it was \$2.50 lower than that just 2 years ago.

It's time that we as Republicans and Democrats work together. The American people want that. It's time that we work together to lower the price of gasoline and other energy products. And we can do that by drilling in the ANWR, drilling off the Continental Shelf, drilling in our national forests where we can get natural gas, which is a clean burning fuel. And if we just start doing that, and at the same time look at other energy sources, new sources that are nonpollutants, we would be in great shape. Incidentally, we also have about two trillion barrels of oil in oil shale.

Let me just say to my colleagues that I hope that you will take heed to what I've said today. The American people want lower gas prices. We have it within our power to start drilling where we can get gas out of this country, natural gas, oil, and other things. Just tell the American people what you think and ask them what they think. And they're going to say "Drill in

America." You can do it in an environmentally safe way.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Indiana for the opportunity to spend as much time with him as we have spent this afternoon. I also want to commend him for his advocacy, especially the effort to get down the price of gasoline.

I have no lack of confidence in our ability to make that happen, especially when I think of the efforts that have been put forth to produce more energy-efficient automobiles, to make sure that we're not polluting our environment as much. And I think those people that I would come into contact with would say to me, you know, if we start drilling right now all over the place, the prices are going to be the same next week, they're going to be the same next month.

They want some relief that is as immediate—and I don't really have to come to Washington because they stop me in Chicago, where we pay more than anybody else in the country. And so I want to thank the gentleman for his comments and urge passage of this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill, S. 1245.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the Senate bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 5 o'clock and 56 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m.

□ 1830

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. HIRONO) at 6 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 6003, PASSENGER RAIL INVESTMENT AND IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2008

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 110-703) on the resolution (H. Res. 1253) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 6003) to reauthorize Amtrak, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on motions to suspend the rules previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

H. Res. 1225, by the yeas and nays;

H. Res. 1243, by the yeas and nays;

H. Res. 127, by the yeas and nays.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. Remaining electronic votes will be conducted as 5-minute votes.

NATIONAL SAFETY MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 1225, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. YARMUTH) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 1225.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 379, nays 0, not voting 54, as follows:

[Roll No. 388]

YEAS—379

| | | |
|----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Abercrombie | Camp (MI) | Doolittle |
| Ackerman | Campbell (CA) | Doyle |
| Aderholt | Cannon | Drake |
| Akin | Cantor | Dreier |
| Alexander | Capito | Duncan |
| Allen | Capps | Edwards |
| Altmire | Cardoza | Ellison |
| Andrews | Carney | Ellsworth |
| Arcuri | Carson | Emanuel |
| Baca | Carter | Emerson |
| Bachmann | Castle | Engel |
| Bachus | Castor | English (PA) |
| Baird | Cazayoux | Eshoo |
| Baldwin | Chabot | Etheridge |
| Barrow | Chandler | Everett |
| Bartlett (MD) | Childers | Fallin |
| Barton (TX) | Clarke | Farr |
| Bean | Clay | Fattah |
| Becerra | Cleaver | Feeney |
| Berkley | Clyburn | Ferguson |
| Berman | Coble | Flake |
| Berry | Cohen | Forbes |
| Biggert | Cole (OK) | Fortenberry |
| Blibray | Conaway | Foster |
| Bilirakis | Conyers | Fox |
| Bishop (NY) | Cooper | Frank (MA) |
| Blackburn | Costa | Franks (AZ) |
| Blumenauer | Courtney | Frelinghuysen |
| Blunt | Cramer | Gallegly |
| Boehner | Crenshaw | Garrett (NJ) |
| Bonner | Crowley | Gerlach |
| Bono Mack | Cuellar | Giffords |
| Boozman | Culberson | Gingrey |
| Boren | Cummings | Gohmert |
| Boswell | Davis (CA) | Gonzalez |
| Boucher | Davis (IL) | Goode |
| Boustany | Davis (KY) | Goodlatte |
| Boyd (FL) | Davis, David | Gordon |
| Boyda (KS) | Davis, Lincoln | Granger |
| Brady (PA) | Davis, Tom | Graves |
| Brady (TX) | Deal (GA) | Green, Al |
| Braley (IA) | DeFazio | Green, Gene |
| Broun (GA) | DeGette | Gutierrez |
| Brown (SC) | Delahunt | Hall (NY) |
| Brown, Corrine | DeLauro | Hall (TX) |
| Brown-Waite, | Dent | Hastings (FL) |
| Ginny | Diaz-Balart, L. | Hayes |
| Buchanan | Diaz-Balart, M. | Heller |
| Burgess | Dicks | Hensarling |
| Burton (IN) | Dingell | Heger |
| Butterfield | Doggett | Higgins |
| Calvert | Donnelly | Hill |