

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I took a leave of absence the afternoon of July 10, 2008, as I was attending to personal business. The following list describes how I would have voted had I been in attendance this afternoon.

"Yea"—on Pearce (NM) amendment.

"Aye"—on Motion to Recommit H.R. 1286.

"Yea"—Final Passage H.R. 1286—Revoluntary Route National Historic Trail Designation Act.

"Yea"—Motion to Instruct Conferees on H.R. 1321—Flood Insurance Reform and Modernization Act of 2007.

APPOINTMENT OF CONFEREES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. EDWARDS of Maryland). Without objection, the Chair appoints the following conferees:

From the Committee on Financial Services, for consideration of the House bill and the Senate amendment, and modifications committed to conference: Messrs. FRANK of Massachusetts, KANJORSKI, Ms. WATERS, Messrs. WATT, CLAY, KLEIN of Florida, MAHONEY of Florida, BACHUS, Mrs. BIGGERT, Mrs. CAPITO, Messrs. GARRETT of New Jersey, and PRICE of Georgia.

From the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for consideration of sec. 302 of the Senate amendment, and modifications committed to conference: Messrs. DINGELL, BOUCHER, and BARTON of Texas.

From the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, for consideration of secs. 7 and 22 of the House bill, and secs. 107, 119, and 301 of the Senate amendment, and modifications committed to conference: Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Messrs. BRALEY of Iowa, and GRAVES.

For consideration of secs. 7 and 35 of the House bill, and sec. 128 of the Senate amendment, and modifications committed to conference: Mr. TAYLOR.

There was no objection.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. WATERS. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that Members may have 5 days to revise and extend their remarks on the motion to instruct on H.R. 3121.

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

There was no objection.

AUTHORIZING THE CLERK TO MAKE CORRECTIONS IN ENGROSSMENT OF H.R. 1286, WASHINGTON-ROCHAMBEAU REVOLUTIONARY ROUTE NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL DESIGNATION ACT

Ms. WATERS. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Clerk be authorized to make technical corrections in the engrossment of H.R. 1286, including corrections in spelling, punctuation, section and title numbering, cross-referencing, conforming amendments to the table of contents and short titles, and the insertion of appropriate headings.

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

There was no objection.

PROVIDING FOR CONTINUED BENEFITS FOR CERTAIN SENATE RESTAURANTS EMPLOYEES

Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take from the Speaker's table the Senate bill (S. 2967) to provide for certain Federal employee benefits to be continued for certain employees of the Senate Restaurants after operations of the Senate Restaurants are contracted to be performed by a private business concern, and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the Senate bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the gentleman from Pennsylvania?

There was no objection.

The text of the Senate bill is as follows:

S. 2967

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

SECTION 1. CONTINUED BENEFITS FOR CERTAIN SENATE RESTAURANTS EMPLOYEES.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) CONTRACTOR.—The term "contractor" means the private business concern that enters into a food services contract with the Architect of the Capitol.

(2) COVERED INDIVIDUAL.—The term "covered individual" means any individual who—

(A) is a Senate Restaurants employee who is an employee of the Architect of the Capitol on the date of enactment of this Act, including—

(i) a permanent, full-time or part-time employee;

(ii) a temporary, full-time or part-time employee; and

(iii) an employee in a position described under the second or third provisos under the subheading "SENATE OFFICE BUILDINGS" under the heading "CAPITOL BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS" under the heading "ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL" in the Legislative Branch Appropriations Act, 1972 (2 U.S.C. 2048);

(B) becomes an employee of the contractor under a food services contract on the transfer date; and

(C) with respect to benefits under subsection (c)(2) or (3), files an election before the transfer date with the Office of Human Resources of the Architect of the Capitol to have 1 or more benefits continued in accordance with this section.

(3) FOOD SERVICES CONTRACT.—The term "food services contract" means a contract under which food services operations of the Senate Restaurants are transferred to, and performed by, a private business concern.

(4) TRANSFER DATE.—The term "transfer date" means the date on which a contractor begins the performance of food services operations under a food services contract.

(b) ELECTION OF COVERAGE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—

(A) RETIREMENT COVERAGE.—Not later than the day before the transfer date, an individual described under subsection (a)(2)(A) and (B) may file an election with the Office of Human Resources of the Architect of the

Capitol to continue coverage under the retirement system under which that individual is covered on that day.

(B) LIFE AND HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE.—If the individual files an election under subparagraph (A) to continue retirement coverage, the individual may also file an election with the Office of Human Resources of the Architect of the Capitol to continue coverage of any other benefit under subsection (c)(2) or (3) for which that individual is covered on that day. Any election under this subparagraph shall be filed not later than the day before the transfer date.

(2) NOTIFICATION TO THE OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT.—The Office of Human Resources of the Architect of the Capitol shall provide timely notification to the Office of Personnel Management of any election filed under paragraph (1).

(c) CONTINUITY OF BENEFITS.—

(1) PAY.—The rate of basic pay of a covered individual as an employee of a contractor, or successor contractor, during a period of continuous service may not be reduced to a rate less than the rate of basic pay paid to that individual as an employee of the Architect of the Capitol on the day before the transfer date, except for cause.

(2) RETIREMENT AND LIFE INSURANCE BENEFITS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of chapters 83, 84, and 87 of title 5, United States Code—

(i) any period of continuous service performed by a covered individual as an employee of a contractor, or successor contractor, shall be deemed to be a period of service as an employee of the Architect of the Capitol; and

(ii) the rate of basic pay of the covered individual during the period described under clause (i) shall be deemed to be the rate of basic pay of that individual as an employee of the Architect of the Capitol on the date on which the Architect of the Capitol enters into the food services contract.

(B) TREATMENT AS CIVIL SERVICE RETIREMENT OFFSET EMPLOYEES.—In the case of a covered individual who on the day before the transfer date is subject to subchapter III of chapter 83 of title 5, United States Code, but whose employment with the Architect of the Capitol is not employment for purposes of title II of the Social Security Act and chapter 21 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986—

(i) the employment described under subparagraph (A)(i) shall, for purposes of subchapter III of chapter 83 of title 5, United States Code, be deemed to be—

(I) employment of an individual described under section 8402(b)(2) of title 5, United States Code; and

(II) Federal service as defined under section 8349(c) of title 5, United States Code; and

(ii) the basic pay described under subparagraph (A)(ii) for employment described under subparagraph (A)(i) shall be deemed to be Federal wages as defined under section 8334(k)(2)(C)(i) of title 5, United States Code.

(3) HEALTH INSURANCE BENEFITS.—For purposes of chapters 89, 89A, and 89B of title 5, United States Code, any period of continuous service performed by a covered individual as an employee of a contractor, or successor contractor, shall be deemed to be a period of service as an employee of the Architect of the Capitol.

(4) LEAVE.—

(A) CREDIT OF LEAVE.—Subject to section 6304 of title 5, United States Code, annual and sick leave balances of any covered individual shall be credited to the leave accounts of that individual as an employee of the contractor, or any successor contractor. A food services contract may include provisions

similar to regulations prescribed under section 6308 of title 5, United States Code, to implement this subparagraph.

(B) ACCRUAL RATE.—During any period of continuous service performed by a covered individual as an employee of a contractor, or successor contractor, that individual shall continue to accrue annual and sick leave at rates not less than the rates applicable to that individual on the day before the transfer date.

(C) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The second and third provisos under the subheading "SENATE OFFICE BUILDINGS" under the heading "CAPITOL BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS" under the heading "ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL" in the Legislative Branch Appropriations Act, 1972 (2 U.S.C. 2048) are repealed.

(5) TRANSIT SUBSIDY.—For purposes of any benefit under section 7905 of title 5, United States Code, any period of continuous service performed by a covered individual as an employee of a contractor, or successor contractor, shall be deemed to be a period of service as an employee of the Architect of the Capitol.

(6) EMPLOYEE PAY; GOVERNMENT CONTRIBUTIONS; TRANSIT SUBSIDY PAYMENTS; AND OTHER BENEFITS.—

(A) PAYMENT BY CONTRACTOR.—A contractor, or any successor to the contractor, shall pay—

(i) the pay of a covered individual as an employee of a contractor, or successor contractor, during a period of continuous service;

(ii) Government contributions for the benefits of a covered individual under paragraph (2) or (3);

(iii) any transit subsidy for a covered individual under paragraph (5); and

(iv) any payment for any other benefit for a covered individual in accordance with a food services contract.

(B) REIMBURSEMENTS AND PAYMENTS BY ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL.—From appropriations made available to the Architect of the Capitol under the heading "SENATE OFFICE BUILDINGS" under the heading "ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL", the Architect of the Capitol shall—

(i) reimburse a contractor, or any successor contractor, for that portion of any payment under subparagraph (A) which the Architect of the Capitol agreed to pay under a food services contract; and

(ii) pay a contractor, or any successor contractor, for any administrative fee (or portion of an administrative fee) which the Architect of the Capitol agreed to pay under a food services contract.

(7) REGULATIONS.—

(A) OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—After consultation with the Architect of the Capitol, the Director of the Office of Personnel Management shall prescribe regulations to provide for the continuity of benefits under paragraphs (2) and (3).

(ii) CONTENTS.—Regulations under this subparagraph shall—

(I) include regulations relating to employee deductions and employee and employer contributions and deposits in the Civil Service Retirement and Disability Fund, the Employees' Life Insurance Fund, and the Employees Health Benefits Fund; and

(II) provide for the Architect of the Capitol to perform employer administrative functions necessary to ensure administration of continued coverage of benefits under paragraphs (2) and (3), including receipt and transmission of the deductions, contributions, and deposits described under subclause (I), the collection and transmission of such information as necessary, and the perform-

ance of other administrative functions as may be required.

(B) THRIFT SAVINGS PLAN BENEFITS.—After consultation with the Architect of the Capitol, the Executive Director appointed by the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board under section 8474(a) of title 5, United States Code, shall prescribe regulations to provide for the continuity of benefits under paragraph (2) of this subsection relating to subchapter III of chapter 84 of that title. Regulations under this subparagraph shall include regulations relating to employee deductions and employee and employer contributions and deposits in the Thrift Savings Fund.

(d) COVERED INDIVIDUALS NOT ENTITLED TO SEVERANCE PAY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided under paragraph (2), a covered individual shall not be entitled to severance pay under section 5595 of title 5, United States Code, by reason of—

(A) separation from service with the Architect of the Capitol and becoming an employee of a contractor under a food services contract; or

(B) termination of employment with a contractor, or successor to a contractor.

(2) SEPARATION DURING 90-DAY PERIOD.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—

(i) COVERED INDIVIDUALS.—Except as provided under clause (ii), a covered individual shall be entitled to severance pay under section 5595 of title 5, United States Code, if during the 90-day period following the transfer date the employment of that individual with a contractor is terminated as provided under a food services contract.

(ii) EXCEPTION.—Clause (i) shall not apply to a covered individual who is terminated for cause.

(B) TREATMENT.—For purposes of section 5595 of title 5, United States Code—

(i) any period of continuous service performed by a covered individual described under subparagraph (A) as an employee of a contractor shall be deemed to be a period of service as an employee of the Architect of the Capitol; and

(ii) any termination of employment of a covered individual described under subparagraph (A) with a contractor shall be treated as a separation from service with the Architect of the Capitol.

(e) VOLUNTARY SEPARATION INCENTIVE PAYMENTS.—

(1) SUBMISSION OF PLAN.—Not later than 30 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Architect of the Capitol shall submit a plan under section 210 of the Legislative Branch Appropriations Act, 2005 (2 U.S.C. 60q) to the applicable committees as provided under that section.

(2) PLAN.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding section 210(e) of the Legislative Branch Appropriations Act, 2005 (2 U.S.C. 60q(e)), the plan submitted under this subsection shall—

(i) offer a voluntary separation incentive payment to any employee described under subsection (a)(2)(A) of this section in accordance with section 210 of that Act; and

(ii) offer such a payment to any such employee who becomes a covered individual, if that individual accepts the offer during the 90-day period following the transfer date.

(B) TREATMENT OF COVERED INDIVIDUALS.—For purposes of the plan under this subsection—

(i) any period of continuous service performed by a covered individual as an employee of a contractor shall be deemed to be a period of service as an employee of the Architect of the Capitol; and

(ii) any termination of employment of a covered individual with a contractor shall be treated as a separation from service with the Architect of the Capitol.

(f) EARLY RETIREMENT TREATMENT FOR CERTAIN SEPARATED EMPLOYEES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—This subsection applies to—

(A) an employee of the Senate Restaurants of the Office of the Architect of the Capitol who—

(i) voluntarily separates from service on or after the date of enactment of this Act, but prior to the day before the transfer date; and

(ii) on such date of separation—

(I) has completed 25 years of service as defined under section 8331(12) or 8401(26) of title 5, United States Code; or

(II) has completed 20 years of such service and is at least 50 years of age; and

(B) except as provided under paragraph (2), a covered individual—

(i) whose employment with a contractor is terminated as provided under a food services contract during the 90-day period following the transfer date; and

(ii) on the date of such termination—

(I) has completed 25 years of service as defined under section 8331(12) or 8401(26) of title 5, United States Code; or

(II) has completed 20 years of such service and is at least 50 years of age.

(2) EXCEPTION.—Paragraph (1)(B) shall not apply to a covered individual who is terminated for cause.

(3) TREATMENT.—

(A) ANNUITY.—Notwithstanding any provision of chapter 83 or 84 of title 5, United States Code, an employee described under paragraph (1) is entitled to an annuity which shall be computed consistent with the provisions of law applicable to annuities under section 8336(d) or 8414(b) of title 5, United States Code.

(B) SEPARATION DURING 90-DAY PERIOD.—For purposes of chapter 83 or 84 of title 5, United States Code—

(i) any period of continuous service performed by a covered individual described under paragraphs (1)(B) and (2) as an employee of a contractor shall be deemed to be a period of service as an employee of the Architect of the Capitol; and

(ii) any termination of employment of a covered individual described under paragraphs (1)(B) and (2) with a contractor shall be treated as a separation from service with the Architect of the Capitol.

(g) CONGRESSIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 1995.—

(1) EMPLOYEES OF THE ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL.—Section 101(5) of the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. 1301(5)) is amended by striking "the Botanic Garden, or the Senate Restaurant" and inserting "or the Botanic Garden".

(2) DISABILITIES.—Section 210(a)(7) of the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. 1331(a)(7)) is amended by striking "the Senate Restaurants and the Botanic Garden" and inserting "the Botanic Garden".

(3) CONTINUING APPLICATION TO CERTAIN ACTS AND OMISSIONS.—For purposes of the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. 1301 et seq.) a covered individual shall be treated as an employee of the Architect of the Capitol with respect to any act or omission which occurred before the transfer date.

(h) DEPOSIT OF COMMISSIONS.—

(1) SENATE RESTAURANTS FOOD SERVICES CONTRACT.—Any commissions paid by a contractor under a food services contract shall be deposited in the miscellaneous items account within the contingent fund of the Senate.

(2) USE OF FUNDS.—Any funds deposited under paragraph (1) shall be available for expenditure in the same manner as funds appropriated into that account.

(i) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This Act shall take effect on the date of enactment of this Act and apply to the remainder of the fiscal year

in which enacted and each fiscal year thereafter.

The Senate bill was ordered to be read a third time, was read the third time, and passed, and a motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

HONORING THE LIFE OF JESSE ALEXANDER HELMS, JR., DISTINGUISHED FORMER SENATOR FROM NORTH CAROLINA

Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on House Administration be discharged from further consideration of House Resolution 1325 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

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

There was no objection.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 1325

Whereas Jesse Alexander Helms, Jr., born in Monroe, North Carolina on October 18, 1921, spent a 52-year public career dedicating himself to his country, his family, and his home State, representing North Carolina in the United States Senate for 30 years;

Whereas Jesse Alexander Helms, Jr., served in the United States Navy from 1942 until 1945;

Whereas Jesse Alexander Helms, Jr., was educated in the public schools of Monroe, North Carolina, and at Wingate Junior College and Wake Forest College, and served as a city editor of the Raleigh Times, an administrative assistant to United States Senators Willis Smith and Alton Lennon, an executive director of the North Carolina Bankers Association, a member of the Raleigh City Council, and a television and radio executive;

Whereas Jesse Alexander Helms, Jr., was elected to the United States Senate in 1972, and served as Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the Senate Agriculture Committee, ultimately serving five terms, equal to the longest service of any Senator from North Carolina;

Whereas Jesse Alexander Helms, Jr., was a leader against Communism and became the first legislator of any nation to address the United Nations Security Council;

Whereas Jesse Alexander Helms, Jr., was married for 65 years to Dorothy "Dot" Coble Helms, whom he termed his "best friend", and Jesse Alexander Helms, Jr., is the father of three children; and

Whereas Jesse Alexander Helms, Jr., made valuable contributions to his community, State, Nation, and the World: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) honors the life, achievements, and distinguished career of Jesse Alexander Helms, Jr., public servant and former Member of the United States Senate; and

(2) expresses its condolences to his wife, "Dot", and his three children on his passing.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

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

Mr. BLUNT. Madam Speaker, I yield to my friend from Maryland, the majority leader, to tell us what is planned for next week.

Mr. HOYER. I thank my friend, the Republican Whip, for yielding.

On Monday, the House will meet at 12:30 p.m. for morning hour and 2 p.m. for legislative business, with votes postponed until 6:30 p.m. On Tuesday, the House will meet at 9 a.m. for morning hour and 10 a.m. for legislative business. On Wednesday and Thursday, the House will meet at 10 a.m. for legislative business. On Friday, no votes are expected in the House.

We will consider several bills under suspension of the rules. The complete list of suspension bills will be announced by the close of business tomorrow.

In addition, we will consider H.R. 415, a bill to designate segments of the Taunton River in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as a component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers.

In addition, we will consider H.R. 5959, the Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009; H.R. 3999, the National Highway Bridge Reconstruction and Inspection Act; and, we may also consider important energy-related legislation.

Mr. BLUNT. I thank the gentleman for that information.

On H.R. 415, the Taunton River bill, the Wild and Scenic Rivers bill, does the gentleman know, does the location change at all? Or was it the location that was on the bill that earlier was scheduled for this week?

Mr. HOYER. In response, if the gentleman would yield.

Mr. BLUNT. I will.

Mr. HOYER. It is the same bill.

Mr. BLUNT. I think one of our concerns about that on the energy topic, which I would hope to go to for a few minutes next, is there was a proposed liquid natural gas facility in that area that I think this designation will impact unless it is defined somehow out of that. And if the gentleman wants to respond to that, I would yield.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

There is an extensive letter to all of our colleagues from Congressmen FRANK, MCGOVERN, KENNEDY, LANGEVIN, and LYNCH.

I don't want to read the whole letter; but responding to the points in question, I am looking at the letter to see whether or not—one of the points they make is that notwithstanding this bill there are several barriers to this proposal going forward, that is the LNG plant. Killing the bill that would provide environmental benefits to people of our districts would in no way save the LNG plant from the rejection it has already received. The point being, and I have not read the entire letter, but that there are other impediments apparently to moving forward on that LNG plant. As I say, it is a long letter, I haven't read it fully, but I do know that each one of the points that was

raised in the article today have been responded to and therefore will be the subject of debate once the bill is considered.

Mr. BLUNT. I thank the gentleman for that. And that is exactly right. That will be a bill to be debated, and leaders shouldn't be expected to know everything about every aspect of that, and particularly on a bill that will be debated. I would assume that this designation would create an additional obstacle, and there may be other obstacles already in place and I am sure that will be part of the debate.

The gentleman's last comment about work for next week indicated that there may be other energy-related bills scheduled for the floor next week. Does the gentleman have a sense of what some of those options might be, and which ones may be more likely to be on the floor next week?

I would yield.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Yes. As you know, we have been talking about, on both sides of the aisle, developing greater domestic supply from that which we have control over here in this country. I think both sides agree that that is an objective that ought to be pursued. The differences have been I think where that should be done at least in the short term, maybe not in the long term.

In the short term, it is our belief that there is very substantial areas available for further exploration and development of energy resources from our own country. As the gentleman may have heard me say on the floor earlier today, there is about 88 million acres that we believe is currently available for leasing that experts indicate are prime opportunities for finding, drilling, and producing energy for our country. We may well consider legislation which will try to accelerate, particularly in Alaska, where there is 23 million acres in the National Petroleum Reserve area designated and approved by the Congress for drilling, where approximately 1 million acres of that has been currently let for lease but there are substantial millions of acres still available. So we may well have legislation which will direct the administration to accelerate the leases for that area and speed the development.

In addition, we may well include in that legislation the Use It Or Lose It bill, we had disagreements on whether that was appropriate, which essentially says to companies: Don't inventory large segments. If you are not going to use it, let's get it back and give it to some who may well use it at this point in time. Again, an opportunity to accelerate the exploration and securing of oil within our control here in this country.

In addition, that legislation I think will include a requirement that any oil petroleum products that are produced as a result of this legislation or as a result of these leaseholds being extended, that petroleum would need to be used