EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

DEPARTMENTS OF COMMERCE, JUSTICE, AND STATE, THE JUDICIARY, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1998

SPEECH OF

HON. SANDER M. LEVIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 30, 1997

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2267) making appropriations for the Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State, the Judiciary, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1998, and for other purposes:

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the Hyde amendment to the Commerce-Justice-State appropriation.

In Committee there was a provision added that would have allowed Members of Congress and their staffs to be reimbursed for legal costs in cases where they were the prevailing party against the Federal Government, unless a court found that the Government's case was ''substantially justified or that other special circumstances would make an award unjust.''

Under this provision, the burden of proof would be placed on Government prosecutors who would not only have to prove that there was probable cause a crime had been committed, but also that they were substantially justified in bringing the case to trial.

It was my intention to vote for an amendment to completely strike the committee language from the bill. Unfortunately, the Congress was not given an opportunity to vote on such an amendment.

Instead the Congress considered the Hyde amendment. This amendment took a questionable approach to a handful of cases involving Congress and sought to apply it to all cases prosecuted by the Government. This would open the Government up to a flood of litigation every time it lost a case, regardless of the circumstances.

It was a bad idea for cases involving Congress and it's an exponentially worse when it's extended to everyone else. The fact is that if this provision were to become law, the Department of Justice would choose not to pursue difficult, but legitimate, criminal cases such as those involving rape and child molestation.

CELEBRATING NATIONAL DYSTONIA AWARENESS WEEK

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 6, 1997

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate October 12–19 as National Dystonia Awareness Week.

Mr. Speaker, I became interested in the efforts of organizations that promote public awareness and research into dystonia when one of my constituents, Larry Bienstock, brought to my attention his long-term battle with this devastating disease. After receiving his law degree from New York University, Larry was a leading figure in bringing people together who were concerned about dystonia and in establishing a strong collective voice for advocacy.

Dystonia is a rare neurological disorder characterized by severe muscle contractions and sustained postures that afflict an estimated 300,000 people in North America. The three major types of dystonia are primary, focal dystonia, and secondary dystonia.

Primary dystonia, also known as idiopathic torsion dystonia, causes spasms that affect different parts of the body and often starts in childhood.

Focal dystonia affects one specific part of the body, distinguished in five categories: blepharospasm, cervical dystonia, oromandibular dystonia, spasmodic dysphonia, and writer's cramp. Blepharospasm causes eyelids to rise tightly for seconds to hours. Cervical dystonia is the contraction on neck muscles turning the head to one side or pulling it forward or backward. Oromandibular dystonia—also known as Meige's Syndrome—is a combination of blepharospasm and oromanibular dystonia in which the muscles of the lower face pull or contract irregularly to cause facial distortions. Spasmodic dysphonia affects the speech muscles of the throat, causing strained, forced, or breathy speech. Writer's cramp is characterized by muscles in the hand and forearm contracting.

The final type of dystonia, secondary dystonia, is caused by an injury or other brain illness.

Unfortunately at this time, there is no definite test for dystonia and many primary care doctors have only minimal knowledge of the symptoms of this disease. The medical profession has found this particular neurological disorder difficult to detect, and therefore it is difficult to correctly diagnose individuals suffering from dystonia. Dystonia affects six times more Americans than other better known disorders such as Huntington's disease and muscular dystrophy.

Those who suffer from dystonia, their families, and their friends have benefited from the creation of the Affiliated National Dystonia Association [ANDA], which is comprised of the Dystonia Medical Research Foundation, the National Spasmodic Dysphonia Association, and the National Spasmodic Torticollis Association. I applaud their work, and support their outstanding efforts.

ANDA provides outreach education regarding the various types of dystonia to both the medical and lay communities, including school systems, government, and the media. It also provides for medical grants to promote research into the causes of and treatment for dystonia. Finally, ANDA sponsors patient and family support groups and programs.

Many citizens react to the physical manifestations of dystonia by avoiding those who have this disorder, causing them to experience isolation and suffer grave psychological harm. Greater recognition and understanding of dystonia, both in the medical and the lay communities, is highly desirable. Individuals can obtain more information about dystonia on the world wide web. The Dystonia Medical Research Foundation has created a web page that not only offers information about the various forms of dystonia, but also details meeting places and dates for those who are or have a family member affected by dystonia. The web address is http://www.ziplink.net/users/dystonia/. You can also learn more by visiting an Internet news group dedicated to dystonia research at ''alt.support.dystonia.'' The toll-free number is 1–800–377–DYST (3978).

Today, as we celebrate National Dystonia Awareness Week, I stand with those who have suffered with dystonia and those who have been their advocates. We must continue to increase public awareness of this disease and ultimately, to search for a cure.

HAPPY 50TH ANNIVERSARY LEROY AND JEANETTE

HON. GLENN POSHARD

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 6, 1997

Mr. POSHARD. Mr. Speaker, in an era when many are concerned with the demise of the institution of marriage and the family unit in the United States, I rise today to honor Leroy and Jeanette Linck. It gives me great pleasure to congratulate Leroy and Jeanette on their 50th anniversary. Leroy and Jeanette were married on September 5, 1947 at the Methodist Church in Bartonville. The Linck's joyously celebrated their 50th anniversary with close friends and family on September 6 at an intimate reception in the Spillertown Baptist Church Educational Building for all to share in this wonderful occasion.

Leroy has been an active volunteer in the political arena and through his work experience he is a jack of all trades. Leroy was a Democratic Precinct Committeeman for 32 productive years. His fervor for community involvement was intoxicating and is personally responsible for letting the people in the surrounding areas become aware of the political process. Jeanette dedicated 12 years to her career as a nurse at a local doctor's office until she decided to retire when the practice closed.

Mr. Speaker, in a day where marriages are too often short lived, it is a real treasure to be a witness to a couple that has endured the daily trials and tribulations that cause many couples to fail. The Linck's have proven that they can work things out and muddle through their struggles. This family is no stranger to life's hardships.

Leroy and Jeanette have been blessed with a large, loving family and a strong marriage.

Mr. Speaker, what a monumental achievement to be married for 50 years. It is an honor to represent a couple like the Linck's—they are an inspiration to us all in southern Illinois and I am proud to represent them in the U.S. House of Representatives.

POWER VACUUM AT PANAMA CANAL

HON. PETER T. KING

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 6, 1997

Mr. KING. Mr. Speaker, on October 5, 1997 The New York Times ran an interesting story by Larry Rohter on a power vacuum developing at the Panama Canal. The importance of the Canal to the United States' economic interests should not be underestimated with over 200,000 jobs in our Nation dependent on a safe and efficient Canal operation. For example, one out of every four vessels entering or leaving the Port of New York and New Jersey transits the Panama Canal.

I commend to my colleagues the Rohter story with the hope that officials at the Pentagon will not neglect our responsibilities in Panama over the next 27 months.

[From the New York Times, October 5, 1997]

AS PANAMA CANAL TRANSFER NEARS, MORE JOCKEYING TO FILL A POWER VACUUM

(By Larry Rohter)

MIAMI, Oct. 4.—The sudden resignation of the chairman of the Panama Canal Commission, with barely two years remaining before the United States yields control of the vital waterway, has created a power vacuum that Panama is now maneuvering to fill, American officials and current and former canal officials say.

Meeting in a closed session here this week, the nine-member binational body, created by the Panama Canal Treaties 20 years ago, chose the United States Secretary of the Army, Togo D. West, Jr., to succeed Joe R. Reeder, an American, who resigned on Sept. 15.

But in a nod to Panama's increasingly assertive posture regarding the running of the canal, the board also created a new position, that of vice chairman, and named a Panamanian, Jorge E. Ritter, to the job.

As Minister of State for Canal Affairs and a member of the commission's board, Mr. Ritter is already the Panamanian Government's principal negotiator on canal matters. This summer, President Ernesto Perez Balladares enhanced Mr. Ritter's already considerable influence by naming him director of the Panama Canal Authority, the entity that will assume management of the waterway when the United States hands it over to Panama on Dec. 31, 1999.

Mr. West, on the other hand, is relatively new to canal matters and remains preoccupied with the Army's sexual harassment scandals, the deployment of American troops in Bosnia and a host of other issues. This has led to concerns among some shipping executives and other canal specialists that he will be unable to devote the time required to supervise the handover properly and to assure that the Canal Treaties are properly implemented.

''It makes no sense in the heavy-duty transition that is under way to have the Secretary of the Army as chairman of the Canal Commission,'' said Robert R. McMillan, Mr. Reeder's predecessor as board chairman. ''There is no way he can do justice to the position, no matter how many colonels from his retinue he has swarming around the Canal. With this job, it's hands on or nothing; you can't tune in just for board meetings and be an effective chairman.''

In a telephone interview Friday, Mr. West, a lawyer and former general counsel of the Department of Defense, said his new post ''has always been a part-time job'' and that ''the occasions on which the chairmanship was the sole duty of whoever held it are rare, if any.'' Naming a Panamanian as vice chairman ''probably should have been done before now,'' he added, and ''provides a further sign of the spirit of cooperation'' between the two countries.

''We have every confidence that Secretary West will be fully capable of handling his responsibilities as Secretary of the Army as well as chairman of the Panama Canal Commission board of directors,'' said Capt. Michael Doubleday, a Defense Department spokesman in Washington.

Captain Doubleday noted that former Army Secretary Michael P. Stone also served as chairman of the Panama Canal commission's board, from early 1990 to January 1993.

Like Mr. Pérez Balladares' other nominees to the future Canal Authority, which include four members of his or his wife's family, Mr. Ritter has close ties to the President and the governing Democratic Revolutionary Party. During the rabidly anti-American dictatorship of Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega, who was then leader of the party, Mr. Ritter was Panama's Ambassador to Colombia and then Foreign Minister.

In 1992, after the American invasion that toppled and captured him, General Noriega was convicted here of drug trafficking, racketeering and money laundering to aid Colombian drug cartels and was sentenced to 40 years in prison. During his trial, a witness testified that Mr. Ritter, using his diplomatic privileges while Ambassador in Bogatá, had purchased a Mercedes-Benz on behalf of a leading Colombian drug dealer in return for $50,000. Mr. Ritter has denied that he did anything improper.

''Having to deal with Jorge Ritter is a sizable assignment,'' one American official said, speaking on condition of anonymity. ''That's why it is vitally important to the national interest to have someone in place who can really focus on the situation on a day-to-day basis and provide continuity all the way through 1999.''

Canal officials say that Panama viewed Mr. Reeder's departure, which American officials attributed to tensions between him and Mr. West, as an opportunity to strengthen its presence on the commission. There had even been informal suggestions that the new chairman be a Panamanian, they said, which led to negotiations aimed at avoiding a show of discord at the body's next public meeting, scheduled to take place in New York this month.

Mr. West said that ''if there was any such discussion in the margins, I had no sign of that.'' He described Mr. Ritter as ''a very impressive person, intellectually very sharp, the right person to do this job,'' but, when asked if he himself expected to remain as chairman of the commission through 1999, he did not answer directly.

''There is every intention for all of us to be a stabilizing and not a destabilizing influence,'' he said. Though ''neither I nor the Administration have any present plans for me not to see this through,'' he added, ''the half life of political appointees in any administration is of such a nature that I have already exceeded my expected term.''

DON PIENKOS, 1997 OUTSTANDING AMERICAN OF POLISH DESCENT

HON. GERALD D. KLECZKA

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 6, 1997

Mr. KLECZKA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in heartfelt tribute to my good friend, Don Pienkos, who has been honored by the National Polish Alliance's Milwaukee Society as the 1997 Outstanding American of Polish Descent.

Don has for many years played such an important role in the Polish-American community in the Milwaukee area and nationally. He's been on the board of directors for the Polish National Alliance and is very involved with its Milwaukee Society. He is also active in the Polish American Congress and Milwaukee's Polishfest festival. Dr. Pienkos has also long been a supporter of the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences of America and the Kosciuszko Foundation.

Currently the director of undergraduate studies for the Political Science Department at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Don Pienkos' special area of interest is Eastern Europe and the nations of the former Soviet Union. He has taught at UWM for nearly 30 years, working to instill in his students an appreciation for and understanding of Eastern European politics and culture. In addition, he helped organize UWM's committees on Russian and Eastern European studies, as well as Polish studies.

As a natural outgrowth of his interest, knowledge and pride in his Polish heritage, Don has authored several books on Poland and on Polish-American organizations. These informative works provide us with wonderful accounts of the efforts Polish-Americans have made on behalf of the Polish people and fellow Polish-Americans.

Most recently, Don has been active in Poland's struggle to rebuild its government and economy after the fall of eastern bloc communism. He has worked with elected community leaders from Poland to train them in local democratic government and was in Poland to observe and write about their 1995 elections. Don was also honored to have met with President Clinton and Vice-President GORE to discuss North Atlantic Treaty Organization enlargement, and has worked hard toward the goal of full NATO membership for Poland.

Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to honor Professor Donald Pienkos for his outstanding work in the Polish-American community. I congratulate him on being awarded the Milwaukee Society's Outstanding American of Polish descent and extend my best wishes for a successful Pulaski Day celebration and continued success for years to come. Sto Lat!

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

HON. RON KIND

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 6, 1997

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, today we begin the 6th week of legislation business since returning from the August district work period. Each weekend I return home to western Wisconsin