Peterson (MN)	Scarborough	Terry
Peterson (PA)	Schaffer	Thomas
Petri	Schakowsky	Thompson (CA)
Phelps	Scott	Thompson (MS)
Pickering	Sensenbrenner	Thornberry
Pickett	Serrano	Thune
Pitts	Sessions	Thurman
Pombo	Shaw	Tiahrt
Pomeroy	Shays	Tierney
Porter	Sherman	Toomey
Portman	Sherwood	Towns
Price (NC)	Shimkus	Traficant
Pryce (OH)	Shows	Turner
Quinn	Simpson	Udall (CO)
Rahall	Sisisky	Udall (NM)
Ramstad	Skeen	Upton
Regula	Skelton	Velazquez
Reynolds	Slaughter	Vento
Riley	Smith (NJ)	Visclosky
Rivers	Smith (TX)	Vitter
Rodriguez	Smith (WA)	Walden
Roemer	Snyder	Walsh
Rogan	Souder	Wamp
Rogers	Spence	Watt (NC)
Rohrabacher	Spratt	Watts (OK)
Ros-Lehtinen	Stabenow	Weiner
Rothman	Stark	Weldon (FL)
Roukema	Stearns	Weldon (PA)
Roybal-Allard	Stenholm	Weller
Royce	Strickland	Wexler
Rush	Stump	Weygand
Ryan (WI)	Stupak	Whitfield
Ryun (KS)	Sununu	Wicker
Sabo	Sweeney	Wilson
Salmon	Talent	Wolf
Sanchez	Tancredo	Woolsey
Sanders	Tanner	Wu
Sandlin	Tauscher	Wynn
Sanford	Tauzin	Young (AK)
Sawyer	Taylor (MS)	Young (FL)
Saxton	Taylor (NC)	

NAYS—4

Bonior	Markey
Chenoweth-Hage	Paul

NOT VOTING—33

Ackerman	Hilliard	Payne
Barcia	Jones (NC)	Radanovich
Bass	LaHood	Rangel
Berman	Lee	Reyes
Collins	McCrery	Shadegg
Davis (VA)	McIntyre	Shuster
Dunn	Meehan	Smith (MI)
Ehrlich	Metcalf	Waters
Ewing	Miller, Gary	Watkins
Fossella	Ortiz	Waxman
Hill (MT)	Oxley	Wise

□ 1426

So (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 2420

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that my name be removed as cosponsor of H.R. 2420.

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

There was no objection.

APPOINTMENT OF CONFEREES ON H.R. 2112, MULTIDISTRICT, MULTIPARTY, MULTIFORUM TRIAL JURISDICTION ACT OF 1999

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on the Judiciary, I move to take from the Speaker's table the bill (H.R. 2112), to amend title 28, United States Code, to allow a judge to whom a case is transferred to retain jurisdiction over certain multidistrict litigation cases for trial, and to provide for Federal jurisdiction of certain multiparty, multiforum civil actions, with a Senate amendment thereto, disagree to the Senate amendment, and agree to the conference asked by the Senate.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I support the motion to go to conference on the "Multidistrict, Multiparty, Multiforum Jurisdiction Act of 1999." I would like to begin by expressing thanks to Chairman COBLE and Ranking Member BERMAN as well as Representative SENSENBRENNER for their hard work and on this legislation which is being sought by the federal judiciary.

The most important provision of the bill is section 2 which overturns the recent Supreme Court decision in *Lexecon* v. *Milberg Weiss,* which held that a transferee court assigned to hear pretrial matters must remand all cases back for trial to the districts which they were originally filed, regardless of the views of the parties. This decision conflicts with some 30 years of practice by which transferee courts were able to retain such jurisdiction under Title 28. The Judicial Conference has testified that the previous process has worked well and served the interest of efficiency and judicial expedience.

There was a concern raised at the Subcommittee hearing that as originally drafted this provision would have gone far beyond simply permitting a transferee court to conduct a liability trial, but instead, allowed the court to also determine compensatory and punitive damages. This could be extremely inconvenient for harmed victims who would need to testify at the damages phase of the trial. As a result of discussions between the minority and majority, Rep. BERMAN successfully offered an amendment addressing this concern at the Full Committee markup.

Section 3 of the bill also expands federal court jurisdiction for single accidents involving at least 25 people having damages in excess of $75,000 per claim and establishes new federal procedures in these limited cases for selection of venue, service of process, issuance of subpoenas and choice of law. The types of cases that would be included under this provision would be plane, train, bus, boat accidents and environmental spills, many of which are already brought in federal court. However, the provision would not apply to mass tort injuries that involve the same injury over and over again such as asbestos and breast implant cases.

While I traditionally oppose having federal courts decide state tort issues, and disfavor the expansion of the jurisdiction of the already-overloaded district courts, I have been willing to support this provision because it would only expand federal court jurisdiction in a very narrow class of actions and is being affirmatively sought for efficiency purposes by the federal courts. This is in stark contrast to the class action bill, which would completely federalize state law and was strongly opposed by the federal and state courts.

Section 3 was not included in the Senate passed bill, so I am hopeful that we can reach an accommodation which satisfies all of the interested parties and allows the more important *Lexecon* provision to proceed. I would also note that the federal judiciary is also seeking to address a number of additional procedural matters, and I would hope that this body would take the time to enact these measures as well.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I have no requests for time. I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the motion.

The previous question was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER).

The motion was agreed to.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the Chair appoints the following conferees: Messrs. HYDE, SENSENBRENNER, COBLE, CONYERS, and BERMAN.

There was no objection.

EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF CONGRESS WITH RESPECT TO DEMOCRACY, FREE ELECTIONS, AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 169) expressing the sense of the House of Representatives with respect to democracy, free elections, and human rights in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 169

Whereas since the 1975 overthrow of the existing Royal Lao Government, Laos has been under the sole control of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party;

Whereas the present Lao constitution provides for a wide range of freedoms for the Lao people, including freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, and freedom of religion, and Laos is a signatory to international conventions on genocide, racial discrimination, discrimination against women, war crimes, and rights of the child;

Whereas since July 1997, Laos has been a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), an organization which has set forth a vision for the year 2020 of a membership consisting of "open societies . . . governed with the consent and greater participation of the people" and "focus(ed) on the welfare and dignity of the human person and the good of the community";

Whereas, despite the Lao constitution and the membership by Laos in ASEAN, the Department of State's Laos Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1998 states that the Lao Government's human rights record deteriorated and that the Lao Government restricts freedom of speech, assembly, association, and religion;

Whereas Amnesty International reports that serious problems persist in the Lao Government's performance in the area of human rights, including the continued detention of prisoners of conscience in extremely harsh conditions, and that in one case a prisoner of conscience held without trial since 1996 was chained and locked in wooden stocks for a period of 20 days;

Whereas Thongsouk Saysangkhi, a political prisoner sentenced to 14 years imprisonment in November 1992 after a grossly unfair