issued by the District Court for Iowa, Johnson County.

After consultation with the Office of General Counsel, I have determined that it is consistent with the precedents and privileges of the House to comply with the subpoena.

Sincerely,

JILL ROHRET,
*District Scheduler.*

## PLEA TO RUSSIAN GOVERNMENT FOR THE RELEASE OF EDMOND POPE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring to the attention of the Russian government an irony that I believe perfectly illustrates why Edmond Pope, an American businessman, held captive for 211 days, should be released.

Since his arrest in April on charges of espionage, Ed Pope has been held in a Russian prison thousands of miles away from his family. He has been denied regular contact with his loved ones, including his ailing parents whose home is in the district I represent. He has been held in utterly uncivilized conditions, and, most distressing of all, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Pope has been denied access to the specialized medical treatment that is needed to detect a recurrence of the rare form of bone cancer that he once battled.

Last Friday, Mr. Speaker, while Ed Pope was sitting in his bare prison cell in Moscow, this House passed a bill granting U.S. residency to a Russian citizen named Marina Khalina and her son, Alec Miftakhov. Marina and Alec live in Portland, Oregon, a mere 250 miles from the parents of a man who is being unjustly held in their native country. Mr. Speaker, 250 miles from Roy Pope, who has terminal cancer, a condition that is made even more unbearable by the knowledge that he may not live to see his son, Ed, returned home.

My comments should not be taken as any criticism about the Russians who have become our latest citizens in Portland. They are not intended that way at all. You see, Marina came to this country in search of medical treatment for her son. The assistance she has received from Oregonians in retaining that treatment for Alec is one of the most transparently generous acts of humanity I have ever witnessed, and it is incredibly important that it be carried out.

Diagnosed with cerebral palsy at age 6 months, Alec's leg muscles and tendons were so contracted that he could not walk. Without the social services or rights that the disabled are afforded in this country, Alec could not go to school in Russia. His desperate mother could not even obtain a wheelchair for her son and carried him in her arms for 7 years.

Thirteen years ago, she met a visiting physician from Salem, Oregon who contacted Shriners Hospitals for Children in Portland. In October of 1989, Marina and her son entered the United States as visitors for the first of 6 operations that Alec would undergo. As he underwent more surgery and rehabilitation, the Immigration and Naturalization Service in Portland granted extensions, allowing Marina and her son to remain in the U.S. Forcing Alec to return to Russia where Ed Pope spends his days peering through steel bars would have halted medical progress and consigned him to a life utterly devoid of hope. Thanks to the outpouring of assistance he received in this country, Alec has been spared that terrible fate. But while Alec receives medical attention in the United States courtesy of the goodwill of the American people and those of my State, the Russian government systematically refuses to grant Ed Pope access to the medical care that could save his life.

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Since the bill granting Marina and Alec residency status was introduced, she has worked in Gresham, Oregon, where she coordinates care for elderly and disabled clients. Alec has earned his high school equivalency degree and hopes to study Web design. Needless to say, the future looks considerably brighter for them in this country thanks to the compassion we have shown in this Congress and that shown by the people of Oregon.

Following passage of the bill granting her a new life in this country, Marina said, ''For us, this is freedom.'' And indeed it is, Mr. Speaker. It is freedom that is being denied to Ed Pope as he sits before a Russian judge awaiting a verdict that could lock him away in prison for more than 20 years.

I know I am not alone in welcoming Marina and Alec to Oregon, and I wish them well and the very best in the years ahead. We are a Nation of immigrants. And as the goodwill shown to Marina and Alec shows, we are a Nation of profoundly decent and compassionate people. But the generosity that has been shown to Alec and Marina stands in stark contrast to the inhumane, unjust imprisonment of Ed Pope. If only the Russian government, indeed, if only the Russian President could follow our example.

So I call upon President Putin not to just reinforce the worst images of Russia in the minds of the people of the West by prolonging Ed Pope's already lengthy imprisonment. Show Ed Pope the kindness that has been shown to Marina Khalina and Alec Miftakhov and release Ed Pope immediately.

## WHY IS CONGRESS STILL IN SESSION?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GIBBONS). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. Speaker, I would obviously rather be home in my home State of South Dakota this evening. I have a couple of important meetings tonight. One was with the folks from Homestake Mine, a mine which has been in service in South Dakota for about 125 years and which has recently announced that it is closing.

I had a meeting scheduled there to talk about those issues. How do we deal with the issue of displaced workers? How do we deal with trying to help this small community transition and diversify its economy?

I also had a meeting this evening with a group of snowmobilers who were interested in the National Park Service proposal to ban snowmobile use in some of our National Parks, as well as with the President's roadless initiative and other things.

However, we are still here in Washington, D.C., and I believe that the people of this country and the people of South Dakota, my home State, need to know why we are here. We are here, I believe, because the President continues to insist on putting politics in this election year ahead of people.

The President, in this budget, has gotten literally everything he has asked for and more in terms of spending. But it is still not enough. And it begs the question, Mr. Speaker: How much is enough? We are still trying to figure that out. What else is the President insisting on?

Well, there are a number of issues unrelated to the budget process itself which he is also insisting that we move on, legislative provisions that would be added on to appropriation bills. One is blanket amnesty for 4 million people who have come to this country illegally since 1986.

We do not think that we ought to be about the business of rewarding people for breaking the law. Now, on the other hand, there are a lot of people in this country who have come here legally and want to be reunited with their families, and we propose that as an alternative to the President's plan. And yet the President is insisting upon blanket amnesty for 4 million people who have come to this country and are here illegally.

One of the other issues that he has insisted upon is that action be taken in the area of hate crimes legislation, legislation which to my understanding has yet to be debated, has yet to be considered in committee or anywhere else.

Another issue which separates us this year, and granted in this election year these issues become more politicized but, nevertheless, we ought to be able to reach a compromise to take the politics out of some of these issues and do what is right for the American people. The President insists upon federalizing education in this country. We happen to believe as a matter of principle that our children are much better served when it is school districts, administrators, and teachers and parents who are in control rather than the Federal bureaucracy from Washington, D.C.

Mr. Speaker, when I travel across my State in South Dakota, and I did during the month of August meet with a number of school districts, the thing I heard over and over and over again is: we need flexibility. Flexibility, flexibility. Allow us to make the decisions about how best to put these dollars to work. Do not have Washington telling us that they know best and coming up with one-size-fits-all solutions. School districts want flexibility.

What else is keeping us here? We passed a tax bill. It had a minimum wage increase on it, which is something the President wanted. We passed a tax bill that includes the President's new market initiative, something that he has worked with our Speaker to try and accomplish. We passed a tax bill that has the repeal of the telephone tax which was put in effect in 1898 to fund the Spanish American War. It needs to be repealed.

We passed a tax bill that allows for the expansion of IRA limits, which is something that I believe the President has also indicated his support for in the past. Deductibility of health insurance premiums for self-employed people, another issue that is included in the tax bill.

Perhaps as important as anything else for the people in my State of South Dakota and all across rural America is a Medicare fix for rural hospitals, something that is very important to rural areas. We have hospitals and skilled nursing facilities and home health agencies that are waiting for this legislation and have come out very much in favor of it. It is about a $30 billion package. It has the support of the American Hospital Association, the American Cancer Society, the National Association of Rural Health Clinics.

Most of the folks in rural areas of this country understand how important this legislation is to their very existence and survival, and so they have asked the President to sign it and not to veto it. And yet the President has indicated that he will veto it, which I think leaves us with one conclusion, Mr. Speaker. That is that the President has decided that this election year is more important than doing the work of the American people. Putting politics ahead of people.

That is why I cannot be with my constituents in South Dakota this evening. And as much as I would like to be home with my constituents, we have to represent their interests, get their work done, complete the agenda of the American people. I hope that the President will work with us.

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The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DELAY addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

## DEMOCRATS' CONCERNS REGARDING HEALTH CARE ISSUES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I listened to the previous speaker on the Republican side, and I know he is well intended. But I wanted to say that I feel very strongly that one of the reasons we are still here, and certainly one of the reasons that has been articulated by the President in his opposition to this Republican tax bill that he has said he will not sign, he will veto if it comes to his desk, is because Democrats and the President and the Vice President feel very strongly that with regard to a number of issues, and I am going to spend time primarily this evening on the health care issues, that the Republican leadership has simply not done its job.

Mr. Speaker, we as Democrats are very concerned about the average citizen and what we do in the House of Representatives and feel very strongly that on a number of issues, and again particularly with regard to health care, that the Republican leadership has simply failed to address the problems that the average American cares about.

We know that we are in times of great economic prosperity and as a result of the President's programs, that prosperity continues. There is a significant Federal surplus for the first time now in a long time. But the problem is that we still have some unmet needs, and particularly with regard to health care. What we see in this tax bill that the previous gentleman from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) mentioned, and that has been the discussion of much debate over the last few days, is that the Republicans really are prioritizing what I call special interests, particularly with regard to HMOs, as opposed to the public interest.

I have been very critical of the fact that this tax bill that came to the floor last Thursday gave the lion's share of the money to the HMOs without any strings attached, without any requirement that they stay in the Medicare program.

Many of my constituents have complained to me about the fact that they signed up with an HMO under Medicare, and then a year later or so they were notified that the HMO was no longer going to cover them and they had to find some other way to cover their health insurance. Granted, they can go back to the traditional Medicare fee-for-service system, and that is fine. For most people, 85 percent of people who are under Medicare, that is fine and that is great.

But there are problems in the sense that traditional fee-for-service does not cover prescription drugs. Many of my seniors signed up for HMOs because they were sort of lured into it by promises on the part of the HMOs that they would get a prescription drug benefit, and then all of a sudden they found that they did not have one.

Well, what the HMOs did is they came back to the Republican leadership and said, look, we are getting out of Medicare because we are not getting enough money, so give us more money. Give us a larger reimbursement rate, and we will get back into the program. The problem is that the tax bill the Republicans put up last week did not attach any strings. They are saying, okay, we are going to give 40 percent of this new money that we have in the surplus, or 40 percent of the money allocated in this bill, to HMOs. But they do not say that they have to stay in the program for more than a year. They do not say that they have to guarantee any particular level of benefits.

Mr. Speaker, I actually had a motion which I brought to the floor yesterday, or the day before last, which said that in order to get this additional money they would have to agree to stay in the Medicare program for at least 3 years and they would have to provide the level of benefits that they initially promised for that 3-year period. Of course, the reference is primarily to prescription drug benefits, which is why most seniors signed up for HMOs in the context of Medicare.

The Republican leadership opposed that motion and they basically say, look, we want to give this money to the HMOs, and we are not going to have any real strings attached to it. The Democrats and the President have been saying that in addition to the fact that they are giving this money to the HMOs with no strings attached, they are taking away or they are not giving sufficient funds or prioritizing funding for the providers of Medicare, the hospitals, the nursing homes, the home health care agencies. They get significantly less percent of this money under the Republican bill than the HMOs do, and yet they are the ones that are really providing the service.

The HMOs are just insurance companies that ultimately go to the hospitals and the nursing homes to provide the service. And these primary providers are getting less of a percentage of this pot than the HMOs. Again, I would say it is because the HMOs are aligned with the Republicans and basically the Republican leadership is doing their bidding.

Now, what do the HMOs do with the money that they get from the Federal Government? Well, first they provide services. But we know a lot of them spend a significant amount of that money paying for their CEOs. They have huge overhead, huge administrative expenses for a lot of their executives. They do a tremendous amount of advertising. That is how they get the seniors to sign up for the HMOs, doing all of this advertising and having these meetings and giving out free dinners and different things to get the seniors to come and sign up.