



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 104th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 141

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, MARCH 14, 1995

No. 47

House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore [Mr. SHAYS].

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,

March 14, 1995.

I hereby designate the Honorable CHRISTOPHER SHAYS to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NEWT GINGRICH,

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING BUSINESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 1995, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 30 minutes, and each Member except the majority and minority leader limited to not to exceed 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida [Mr. GOSS] for 5 minutes.

STATE OF AFFAIRS AT GUANTANAMO BAY

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Speaker, I just returned from a quick visit down to Guantanamo Bay in Cuba to see how the situation was there with the Cubans who are in the detaining camps and see how our military is doing, and I have nothing but accolades to give to our military for the fine job they are doing down there under very difficult circumstances. They are running a city of about 36,000 people in reality and they are doing it with very little material and very little preplanning and

under difficult circumstances when everybody who is there is not necessarily happy to be there in terms of the Cubans who have left.

Cubans had hoped to go to Miami rather than to Guantanamo Bay, but I will say that the Cubans themselves who are in the camps are doing very well. They are well cared for. I spent a good deal of time with Senator BOB GRAHAM from Florida talking directly with them about their problems. The main complaint of course is the paroling process. The immigration process is too slow and it is moving very, very slowly for the children, the elderly, the sick among them, and then the big problem, of course, that it does not provide for some 17,000 to 20,000 Cubans who don't really know where they are going to go because there is no process for them and at the present time they are just living in a camp, a tent camp in Guantanamo without too much hope of what is next.

We talked about the problems that they were having in those camps, the remoteness, the feeling out of touch, the medical attention, the priorities, not enough medicine to go around, not enough doctors' visits, the food. Everybody always complains about food in situations like that, but by and large the Cubans are being very, very well cared for and I think Americans can be proud of that.

Improvements are being made. We are putting in food galleys, putting in air-conditioning in some areas, better recreation areas, better bathrooms, getting away from the port-a-potties, better shelters, sturdier tents with hard roofs. This matters because it is a harsh climate down there. It is an area where the wind often blows hard, the windward passage, and it is subject to hurricanes. In fact, some call it Hurricane Alley in that part of the world.

We have dealt with the water problems, the sewer problems and landfill

problems, and all of this is going on while there is a very intense opposition to Fidel Castro in these camps that has not diminished in any sense at all, and people who think we should negotiate might want to talk to some of these Cubans down there at Guantanamo about the human rights violations, the suffering, the misery, the economic hardship that the Castro government has put them through, even to the point of death and confiscation.

Right now Fidel Castro is in Europe in a self-rehabilitation program promoting himself and what a great guy he is and he has apparently convinced a few people in Copenhagen and is on his way to meet with the President of France and have some type of a photo opportunity to prove to the world that he has not really done all the bad things that these witnesses in Guantanamo are there to attest that he has done.

What is going on in Guantanamo is not without cost. It costs us about \$20 million a month and it doesn't account for all of the costs we are putting in there. Right now, we are using Navy funds, operational and maintenance funds that the Navy needs for steaming, keeping up our readiness, national security, defense, as it were, is being used and we are going to have to restore those funds. When we get through, we are talking about hundreds of millions of dollars for this problem that Fidel Castro has given to the American taxpayer in the way we are handling it today.

There are some very serious problems staring us in the face right now. What is going to be the future of Guantanamo as a base once it is no longer a refugee camp, I don't know, but we are putting a ton of money in the place so we ought to know. But more important than that, what is going to happen when the long hot summer starts and 17,000 to 20,000 Cubans, mostly young

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



adult males, discover that they really have no place to go and no way to get there. That is not a good situation and those who are working in the camps are very, very concerned about it.

There are probably more visits to the psychiatric side of the medical facility right now than any others by people who are already feeling stressed and as hope begins to erode and the summer gets warmer, it is going to be a very difficult situation and one that we cannot wait to solve itself or erupt.

We need to get ahead of the curve. Senator GRAHAM has a very good idea about shifting the visas that were arranged with the Castro government to apply to those folks in Guantanamo so that they can come here rather than some other folks that Fidel Castro might choose.

Senator GRAHAM makes a convincing case that Fidel Castro has violated the agreement that was made in New York with him at the United Nations because he is already charging a thousand dollars for visas for victims of his regime to leave, which is a real extraordinary—it would be a crime in this country, I guess.

I believe very strongly we should encourage our allies to tighten the embargo. It is extraordinary to me that Mexico and Canada and Venezuela and our good friends in France and Spain are trading only with Cuba, sustaining the Castro regime. There are solutions but we don't have much time. We must deal with the issue that is there.

WHERE ARE OUR PRIORITIES?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 1995, the gentlewoman from Oregon [Ms. FURSE] is recognized during morning business for 5 minutes.

Ms. FURSE. Mr. Speaker, I believe that every American wants, and is demanding that Congress change the way it does business. I am committed to changing our spending priorities, and that is what I have been working on. We must cut unnecessary spending, cut waste, and eliminate programs that do not work—like star wars—and we must invest in our citizens and in our communities. That is true national security.

Everyday the Republicans come here to the House floor to talk about their Contract on America and how they are living up to their promises.

To clear up some confusion about exactly what is a contract, I consulted Webster's dictionary. It says that a contract is "a binding agreement between two or more persons * * * a covenant." However, only Republican Members and candidates signed that contract. The American people did not sign that contract. And now the Republicans are not even keeping to their so-called contract.

The promised a vote on term limits to be completed by today. But there was no vote. The majority leaders say "they don't have the votes." That's in-

teresting. For the past 2 months they have been voting in near perfect lock step on every issue that impacts the lives of women, children, and seniors. But when the issue affects themselves, they pull the vote.

The American people want change, but they want a Government that's leaner, not meaner.

After ducking the bill that would affect Members jobs, we are now confronted with a rescission bill where 63 percent of the cuts are in programs that help low-income children and seniors, and not one penny is cut from the Pentagon. Is this what the people said last November? Cut the funds that keep children and seniors out of poverty, but don't touch wasteful Pentagon spending? I don't think so.

America signed a real contract with the men and women in our armed services. But this rescission will cut \$206 million from veterans programs.

Is that what the people asked for last November.

I don't think so.

Why is a phony, one-sided contract more important than a genuine contract signed with our veterans.

To make matters worse, we are not even allowed a real debate on real choices. Is this what the American people said last November? Cut summer jobs, drug-free schools, and low-income heating for seniors, but don't let other choices even be discussed? Doesn't sound very democratic to me.

And lastly, Mr. Speaker, if that wasn't enough, not one penny of these cuts to summer jobs, drug-free schools, and low-income heating for seniors will reduce the deficit. This money taken from seniors and children will go for tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans. Taking money out of the pockets of seniors and children, as well as for future generations and put it in the pockets of those making over \$100,000. I ask again, is this really what the people said last November?

At last, under the 1993 budget, we finally get the deficit going in the right direction—down. But now we are being asked to do voodoo economics all over again. Increase Pentagon spending. Cut taxes on the rich. Drive up the deficit.

I believe that what the people said last November was they want new priorities. The want us to bring common sense to the decisions we make here.

So I would like to remind my Republican colleagues that all of us have a real and binding contract with every citizen in this country. And that is to make our schools competitive, our streets safe and our communities strong. That is the real contract we have with our citizens. It is not a one-sided agreement.

The people in my home State of Oregon overwhelmingly approved a term limits bill. On the first day of this session, I introduced a term limits bill that mirrors the one Oregonians approved. Numerous States have also overwhelmingly supported term limits. The American people have spoken. They want us to vote on term limits,

and they don't want a phony excuse. It is time for the Republicans to honor their own contract and the real contract that we have with the American people.

OSHA'S REGULATORY EXCESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 1995, the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. NORWOOD] is recognized during morning business for 5 minutes.

Mr. NORWOOD. Mr. Speaker, I believe that the American people are frustrated by regulatory process that creates impossible standards. Every day, small businessmen and women are pulling their hair out trying to keep up with unrealistic and overreaching regulatory mandates they cannot possibly comply with. I know that the guardians of the old status quo will scoff at this, but I need only to point to a proposed OSHA rule to make my point.

Mr. Speaker, allow us to consider for a moment OSHA's proposed revision to its confined spaces standard. This applies to people who work in sewers or air ducts or in similarly tight quarters. In the abstract, this is a very reasonable subject for OSHA to be concerned with and employers have a responsibility to workers working in such confined spaces to make sure that their work spaces are as safe as possible.

However, OSHA has taken this a step further. Now OSHA wants to regulate what happens after an accident. If the revised standard is implemented, employers who rely on rescue squads and other outside rescue services to respond to emergencies would have to, and I quote, "ensure that the outside rescuers can effectively respond in a timely manner to a rescue summons," end quote.

Since most employers do not have an entire team of emergency medical technicians standing on guard at their worksites, it is reasonable to assume that these employers will be dependant upon the performance of professional rescue squads to meet OSHA's standards.

Mr. Speaker, accidents do happen. We funded OSHA to try to cut down the chances that a workplace accident would occur. Now OSHA wants an employer to ensure the rescue of a worker after an accident. What bothers me is OSHA's use of the word "ensure." The word "ensure" places an unrealistic burden on the employer, given OSHA's past behavior.

Mr. Speaker, perhaps the bureaucrats over at OSHA have doubts about an employer's desire to ensure a worker's rescue in case of an accident. I have little doubt that employers, often in family businesses, care about their employees, but given OSHA's history, I have serious doubts about allowing OSHA to define when an employer has done enough. I can just see OSHA slapping the employer with a huge fine if a rescue squad gets stuck in traffic.