

floor of Congress. The larger the bill, however, the less attention Congress pays to critical issues. While the need for omnibus bills can be legitimate under some circumstances, I have expressed the concern for many years that abuse of this process cheats Americans out of fair and effective representation. Beginning with the work of the Joint Committee on the Organization of Congress in 1993, I have been working on steps to limit the scope of omnibus bills.

DRAWBACKS

There are several serious problems with omnibus bills. First, citizen representation is diminished. Members get only one vote on hundreds or thousands of different issues. It is very difficult to address important constituent concerns on these issues if a legislator has only one vote on so many provisions. Second, Members rarely have enough time to read—let alone study—large omnibus bills. Members should have the opportunity to ask questions, offer amendments, and debate the merits of every critical issue facing our country. It is impossible to foresee all the consequences of any given bill, and open debate and public scrutiny invariably improve the quality of legislation. Third, omnibus bills place a huge amount of power in the hands of a few key leaders and their staffs, which increases the influence of special interests and the potential for corruption. Omnibus tax bills, for example, are notorious for including numerous tax loopholes for powerful interests with well-connected lobbyists.

WHY?

It is not easy to explain why the Congress has become so dependent on omnibus bills. In part, the volume of work and the tendency to delay action to the last minute contribute to the problem. In addition, Members of Congress do not want to send bills with little political support to the floor as separate bills. Because they avoid the normal committee process, omnibus bills strengthen the power of congressional leaders to shape a bill. The increased reliance on huge omnibus bills reveals the marked deterioration in Congress' consensus-making skills.

The increasing reliance on omnibus bills suggests that Congress is simply unable to deal in a fair and effective manner with the variety, complexity, and sheer number of issues that crowd the agenda. I have the uneasy feeling that these omnibus bills show the Congress losing control of the legislative process. All Americans believe major government reforms are urgent, but Congress is unable to address them deliberately and forthrightly. Members of Congress in both parties complain that there has been a failure of the institution to manage the budget process.

I believe Congress' heavy reliance on omnibus bills is a serious mistake. Congress should take immediate steps to return to more open procedures.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

There are a number of steps Congress should take to alleviate the problems of omnibus bills. First, Members should be given time to review the bills. Although current rules require a three-day waiting period for members to review most bills, the congressional leadership rarely observes these rules. These rules should be strengthened. Second, Congress should enact an expanded line-item veto, which would allow the President to break omnibus bills into separate parts. I support a line-item veto. Earlier this year, the House passed a limited version of the line-item veto that would apply only to yearly spending bills—it would not apply to omnibus budget bills. I voted for a line-item veto that would be tougher on omnibus tax bills, but it was defeated. Third, Congress should limit or prohibit legislation that

deals with many unrelated topics. Currently, for example, the leadership could bring an omnibus bill omnibus bill to the floor that funds a national park and a nuclear submarine, and Members would have limited opportunity to debate the merits of these distinct issues. Bills with such different provisions should be restricted. Fourth, House rules should be changed to allow Members to have a vote on whether or not to divide huge omnibus bills into smaller parts. Current rules allow the leadership to prevent such a vote. I am working to change these rules to allow Members an individual vote on major portions of a bill.

CONCLUSION

Omnibus bills have clearly gotten out of hand. It is simply unacceptable to force Members of Congress to vote on critically important bills that they have not had time to review. It severely diminishes representative democracy when Members are not permitted to vote on separate issues. Omnibus bills can be acceptable when used for legitimate purposes in a limited fashion, but the huge omnibus bills in recent years are an abuse of the system that must be reformed.

THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE END OF WORLD WAR II

HON. BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 11, 1995

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, on the day that Congress has chosen to commemorate and salute the veterans of World War II, to recognize the contributions of the workers whose productivity gave our military men and women the tools they needed to achieve victory.

This Sunday, October 15, thanks to a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities as well as State, local, and private moneys, the men and women of Glenn L. Martin Aircraft Co. will celebrate their role in the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II.

And what a role they played. Glenn L. Martin in the Middle River area of Baltimore County attracted tens of thousands of workers from all over America and forged them into a team that contributed the first modern bombers to the U.S. Navy and Army Air Corps as well as our Allies. During the war, more than 100,000 workers built more than 7,000 bombers.

In addition, these Maryland immigrants created new communities and stayed to raise families and share their talents and ideas.

They won the production battle of World War II. I am delighted that this Sunday will offer them a time of reunion and recognition for their contributions to the victory effort.

TRIBUTE TO BOY SCOUT TROOP 28 OF MAPLE SHADE, NJ

HON. ROBERT E. ANDREWS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 11, 1995

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank Boy Scout Troop 28 of Maple Shade, NJ. On October 7, 1995, members of Troop 28 aided in making my Maple Shade town meeting a rousing success.

I am heartened by the dedication of these young men, and I feel that it is necessary to

honor their contributions. I wish to thank assistant scoutmasters Jim Johnson and Stephen Mandichak, assistant senior patrol leader Michael DeNight, Boy Scouts Louis Fala, Douglas Galson, Douglas Mandichak, Jared Mandichak, and Brian DeNight, Webelo Cub Scout Christopher Fala, and Cub Scouts Richard Fala and Eric Galson.

In serving the people of the First Congressional District of New Jersey, I find it necessary to hold regular town meetings. These town meetings cannot possibly become reality without the aid of my constituents. The young men of Troop 28 presented the colors of the flag of the United States in front of the 50 residents who attended the meeting. All those present witnessed a dedication to our country that no one can match.

It is essential that the youth of our Nation become exposed to civic affairs. By participating in our government at an early age, these young men have learned a lesson that will last a lifetime. It is my hope that they will continue to be involved in their community and the world around them in the years ahead. I urge all of my colleagues to join with me today in honoring Boy Scout Troop 28 of Maple Shade, NJ.

TAIWAN AND WORLD RECOGNITION

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 11, 1995

Ms. JACKSON-LEE. Mr. Speaker, during the August recess, I had an opportunity to visit the Republic of China on Taiwan and to meet with President Lee Teng-Hui and Foreign Minister Frederick Chein. I was very impressed with their plans for further economic growth and political reforms. However, both men appeared very upset with PRC's military exercises around the island during July and August. They viewed the Chinese missile tests as an undisguised military threat against Taiwan and pleaded for international attention to the matter of increasing military tensions in the Asia-Pacific region, emphasizing China's constant belligerence.

I share President Lee and Minister Chien's concern. I noticed that the tests had adversely affected confidence in Taiwan's economic climate, sending both the Taiwanese stock market index plummeting to its lowest level since December 1993 and causing the Taiwan dollar to fall to a 12-month low.

I hope that the Chinese Government, in the spirit of cooperation, will announce its cessation of future military exercises near the shores of Taiwan. Continued exercises will only further discourage Taiwanese business investments in mainland China and exacerbate increased tension in the Taiwan straits. These affronting activities harm both the Republic of China on Taiwan as well as mainland China.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that there will be peace in the Taiwan straits as the Republic of China on Taiwan readies itself for the celebration of National Day on October 10, 1995.