

Alaska [Mr. YOUNG] and the gentleman from American Samoa [Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA] each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Alaska [Mr. YOUNG].

(Mr. YOUNG of Alaska asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 3973 is legislation which I introduced in consultation with the Alaska Federation of Natives. This legislation will authorize a study to assist in the implementation of the recommendations of the Joint Federal/State Commission on Policies and Programs affecting Alaska Natives and is needed to begin to address the social and economic crisis of Alaska Natives.

The primary focus of the 1992 Commission study was to provide an in-depth analysis, with specific recommendations to Congress, the President of the United States, the Alaska Legislature, the Governor of the State of Alaska and the Native community on the social and economic conditions of Alaska Natives. The Commission completed 2 years of research, public hearings and task force discussion and submitted its report in May of 1994.

The Committee on Resources held a joint oversight hearing in November of 1995 with the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee and the Senate Indian Affairs Committee to hear testimony on the Alaska Native Commission report dated May 1994 from the Alaska Native Community, the Governor of the State of Alaska and from the administration. Their testimony focused on recommendations provided by the Commission report on how to address the extremely volatile social and economic conditions of Alaska Natives. This legislation is the outcome of the testimony accepted by all entities in the first step of addressing the crisis status of Alaska Natives.

The Administration has verbally stated no opposition to this legislation and has a letter forthcoming.

I urge my colleagues to vote for passage of H.R. 3973.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1400

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I rise to support this legislation of my colleague from Alaska, the distinguished chairman of the committee and the chief sponsor of this bill.

We share the majority's concern, Mr. Speaker, about the need to do something to improve the economic and social conditions of Alaska Natives. We are proud of the work we have done on a bipartisan basis with the other side in the past. We hope that the chairman and the Alaskan Federation of Natives

will continue to work with us on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, we agree with the thrust of the 1994 report on the Joint Federal-State Commission on Policies and Programs Affecting Alaska Natives. Both the Congress and the State must give Alaskan Native tribes greater opportunities for self-governance. One obvious form would be in terms of enhanced governmental powers, some that we have successfully fought for through passage of Self-Determination Act amendments of 1994, and the Self-Governance Act of 1994.

Another obvious form that would be the recognition and protection of Alaskan Native subsistence hunting and fishing rights, including those won recently by Natives in the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals decision in the "Katie John" decision, as well as congressional review of whether or not "Indian Country" exists in Alaska.

Mr. Speaker, we are all too aware of the fact that of the more than 200 Alaskan Native villages, two-thirds of them do not have piped water and sewer systems. Even health clinics do not have running water. In the Copper River Basin area, incidences of fetal alcohol syndrome in the late 1980's occurred at the astonishing rate of 350 per 1,000 live births. A recent CDC study shows Alaskan Natives are dying from tobacco-related illnesses at a higher rate than any other group in Alaska. Despite the fact Alaskan Natives have the highest medium income among all Native Americans, more than 25 percent still live below the poverty level.

Mr. Speaker, these statistics are, in a word, heartbreaking. There is no question we take our commitment to improving the lives of Native Americans seriously. We intend to do something about these conditions. We simply believe we can do something more quickly if we can work together as we have tried and are doing so on a bipartisan basis.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the adoption of this legislation.

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. EWING). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Alaska [Mr. YOUNG] that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3973, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their re-

marks and to include extraneous materials on the bill just passed.

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

There was no objection.

HELIUM PRIVATIZATION ACT OF 1996

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4168) to amend the Helium Act to authorize the Secretary to enter into agreements with private parties for the recovery and disposal of helium on Federal lands, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 4168

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Helium Privatization Act of 1996".

SEC. 2. AMENDMENT OF HELIUM ACT.

Except as otherwise expressly provided, whenever in this Act an amendment or repeal is expressed in terms of an amendment to, or repeal of, a section or other provision, the reference shall be considered to be made to a section or other provision of the Helium Act (50 U.S.C. 167 to 167n).

SEC. 3. AUTHORITY OF SECRETARY.

Sections 3, 4, and 5 are amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 3. AUTHORITY OF SECRETARY.

"(a) EXTRACTION AND DISPOSAL OF HELIUM ON FEDERAL LANDS.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may enter into agreements with private parties for the recovery and disposal of helium on Federal lands upon such terms and conditions as the Secretary deems fair, reasonable, and necessary.

"(2) LEASEHOLD RIGHTS.—The Secretary may grant leasehold rights to any such helium.

"(3) LIMITATION.—The Secretary may not enter into any agreement by which the Secretary sells such helium other than to a private party with whom the Secretary has an agreement for recovery and disposal of helium.

"(4) REGULATIONS.—Agreements under paragraph (1) may be subject to such regulations as may be prescribed by the Secretary.

"(5) EXISTING RIGHTS.—An agreement under paragraph (1) shall be subject to any rights of any affected Federal oil and gas lessee that may be in existence prior to the date of the agreement.

"(6) TERMS AND CONDITIONS.—An agreement under paragraph (1) (and any extension or renewal of an agreement) shall contain such terms and conditions as the Secretary may consider appropriate.

"(7) PRIOR AGREEMENTS.—This subsection shall not in any manner affect or diminish the rights and obligations of the Secretary and private parties under agreements to dispose of helium produced from Federal lands in existence on the date of enactment of the Helium Privatization Act of 1996 except to the extent that such agreements are renewed or extended after that date.

"(b) STORAGE, TRANSPORTATION, AND SALE.—The Secretary may store, transport, and sell helium only in accordance with this Act.