

these critical accounts, delaying needed airport improvement programs such as those going on in Des Moines today.

More importantly, a depletion of the trust fund poses a very real and very serious safety threat to our already strained air traffic infrastructure. I believe that we will be gambling with public safety if we fail to act promptly to extend the ticket tax.

The ticket tax has been a regular feature of airline travel since 1970. Although it lapsed at the end of last year, passage of this bill is not a new tax. It is an extension of an existing one which has expired.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this important legislation.

□ 1500

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SOLOMON). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas [Mr. ARCHER] that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 668.

The question was taken.

Mr. HILLEARY. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 5 of rule I and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

PERMISSION FOR SPEAKER TO ENTERTAIN MOTIONS TO SUSPEND THE RULES ON WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 1997

Mr. ARCHER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that on Wednesday, February 26, 1997, the Speaker be authorized to entertain motions to suspend the rules and pass the following two bills: H.R. 624, the Armored Car Reciprocity Amendments of 1997; and H.R. 497, to repeal the Federal charter of group hospitalization and medical services.

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

There was no objection.

PERMISSION TO INSERT PROGRAM AND REMARKS OF MEMBER REPRESENTING THE HOUSE AT GEORGE WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY CEREMONIES

Mr. ARCHER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the program and the remarks of the gentlewoman from Maryland [Mrs. MORELLA], the Member representing the House of Representatives at the wreath-laying ceremony at the Washington Monument for the observance of George Washington's birthday on Thursday, February 20, 1997, be inserted in today's CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

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

There was no objection.

A TRIBUTE TO GEORGE WASHINGTON  
(By Congresswoman Connie Morella)

Honored guests, ladies and gentlemen.

We gather here today at this monument in this great federal city of Washington to

honor George Washington, the father and founder of our country. He was a soldier, a nation builder, and a statesman—and, thanks to that mythmaker Parson Weems, a man who could never tell a lie.

As every school child knows, along with that cherry tree tale, Washington was Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Armies, and led the American colonies in their war of revolution against the British Crown.

For eight long years, through many defeats and hardships, Washington led his army of farmers, shopkeepers, and backwoodsman against the mighty forces of King George III. Many doubted he would succeed, but he stayed the course, never wavering until finally the British were defeated and American independence was won.

(As an aside, I have to remind all the Virginians present that Maryland too has a certain connection to Washington. Monumentally and personally.)

I would like to point out that most of the marble facing for the monument came from Maryland—with a little help from Massachusetts!

As a Marylander, I am very proud to also point out that General Washington, after saying goodbye to his officers in New York City, traveled to Annapolis, Maryland, where the Congress was sitting. Two days before Christmas in 1783, Washington resigned as Commander-in-chief "with satisfaction the Appointment I accepted with diffidence. . . Having now finished the work assigned me, I now retire from the great theater of Action." Or so he thought.

Washington hoped to return to his beloved Mount Vernon, there to resume his life as a country gentleman and farmer. But, as we all know, our struggling young country needed him again, and again he answered the call to serve: to ensure our newly won independence, to help transform the government of the new nation from the Articles of Confederation to the Constitution, and then to led the new republic through its earliest days as its President.

Incidentally, a few of our Founding Fathers were rather smitten by royalty. In fact, John Adams proposed that we call our chief executive "High Royal Highness, the President of the United States, and the Protector of the Liberties of the States." How's that for a title? Fortunately, Washington prevailed, and the title became simply "Mr. President!"

Today, we search for role models, for leaders whose steadfastness, character, and selflessness will inspire our children to be good citizens, to use their talents in the service of their communities and country. My friends, we serve our children and grandchildren well when we celebrate the life and career of George Washington.

In 1814, fifteen years after Washington's death, Thomas Jefferson reflected upon his friend, our Friend President:

"His mind was great and powerful. . . no judgment was ever sounder. . . Perhaps the strongest feature in his character was prudence, never acting until every circumstance, every consideration, was maturely weighed, refraining if he saw a doubt, but, when once decided, going through with his purpose. . . His integrity was most pure, his justice the most inflexible I have ever known. . . He was indeed, in every sense of the words, a wise, a good, and a great man."

Ladies and gentlemen, I can add nothing more.

PRESIDENT GEORGE WASHINGTON  
265TH BIRTHDAY OBSERVANCE

Thursday, February 20, 1997, 11:00 am,  
Washington Monument, Washington, DC.

PROGRAM

Opening: Arnold Goldstein, Superintendent, National Capital Parks Central.

Presentation of Colors: Joint Armed Services Color Guard.

To the Colors: Old Guard Fife and Drum Corps.

Pledge of Allegiance: Cub Scout Stephen Strenio, Cub Scout Pack 461, Bethesda, Maryland.

Welcome: Superintendent Goldstein.

Musical Selection: Old Guard Fife and Drum Corps.

Remarks: Russell Train, First Vice President, Washington National Monument Society.

Remarks: Terry Carlstrom, Acting Regional Director, National Capital Region, National Park Service.

Remarks: Honorable Constance Morella, Maryland Eighth District, U.S. House of Representatives.

Presentation of the Wreaths: The Wreath of the U.S. House of Representatives, Honorable Constance Morella. The Wreath of the Washington National Monument Society, Russell Train. The Wreath of the National Park Service, Terry Carlstrom.

TAPS

RETIRING OF THE COLORS

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. (Mr. GEKAS). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

WITHDRAWAL OF REQUEST FOR SPECIAL ORDER

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GEKAS). The gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. GEKAS] withdraws his request for a special order.

THE ISSUE OF EDUCATION AND THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from New York [Mr. OWENS] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, we are again quite pleased to observe that the bipartisan consensus on education is rolling forward. I heard this morning a colleague speak of a new initiative to get Congressmen to go into the classrooms.

We have had such initiatives in New York, where they want you to be a principal or teacher for a day, for some time. These kinds of initiatives are minuscule in terms of the overall problem of improving education, but they are important. It is important to have as much contact as possible.

I understand over the weekend there was a special conference held in Chicago on education as it impacts upon the black community. Nowhere is it more important than in the black community that we take a close look at what is happening with education. The crisis in education is very much the number one crisis in the African-American community.