

ROCKEFELLER AMENDMENT NO. 18

Mr. CONRAD (for Mr. ROCKEFELLER) proposed an amendment to the joint resolution (S.J. Res. 1) supra; as follows:

Beginning on page 3, strike lines 12 through 14 and insert the following:

“SECTION 6. The Congress shall enforce and implement this article by appropriate legislation, which may rely on estimates of outlays and receipts. Medicare outlays shall not be reduced in excess of the amount necessary to preserve the solvency of the Medicare Health Insurance Trust Fund.”

NOTICE OF HEARING

COMMITTEE ON RULES AND ADMINISTRATION

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I wish to announce that the Committee on Rules and Administration will meet in SR-301, Russell Senate Office Building, on Wednesday, March 5, 1997, at 9:30 a.m. to hold an oversight hearing to review the budget and operations of the Secretary of the Senate, Sergeant at Arms, Architect of the Capitol, and the National Gallery of Art.

For further information concerning this hearing, please contact Ed Edens of the committee staff on 224-6678.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry be allowed to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 26, 1997, at 9 a.m. in SR-328A to discuss the impact of capital gains taxes on farmers.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet at 2 p.m. on Wednesday, February 26, 1997 in open session, to receive testimony in review of the defense authorization request for fiscal year 1998 and the future years defense program.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 26, 1997, to conduct a hearing on the oversight on the Monetary Policy Report to Congress pursuant to the Full Employment and Balanced Growth Act of 1978. The witness will be: the Honorable Alan Greenspan, Chairman, Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate

Committee on Indian Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 26, 1997 at 9:30 a.m. to conduct an Oversight Hearing on the President's Budget Request for fiscal year 1998 for the Bureau of Indian Affairs [BIA] and the Indian Health Service [IHS]. The hearing will be held in room 485 of the Russell Senate Office Building.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Labor and Human Resources be authorized to meet in executive session during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 26, 1997, at 9:30 a.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Small Business be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate for a hearing entitled “The President's Fiscal Year 1998 Budget Request for the United States Small Business Administration” on Wednesday, February 26, 1997, which will begin at 9:30 a.m. in room 428A of the Russell Senate Office Building.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs would like to request unanimous consent to hold a hearing on the President's proposed fiscal year 1998 budget for veterans programs. The hearing will be held on February 26, 1997, at 2 p.m. in room 418 of the Russell Senate Office Building.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 26, 1997 at 2:30 p.m. to hold a closed hearing on intelligence matters.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC POLICY

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on International Economic Policy of the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 26, 1997, at 2 p.m. to hold a hearing.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Transportation and Infrastructure be granted permission to meet Wednesday, February 26, at 9:30 a.m., Hearing Room (SD-406), to con-

duct a hearing on the administration's proposal for reauthorization of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act [ISTEA] and the performance of ISTEA's programs.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

HOMEOWNERS PROTECTION ACT OF 1997

● Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, today I am pleased to announce my support for S. 318, a bill introduced by the distinguished chairman of the Senate Banking Committee, Senator D'AMATO. This bill, the Homeowners Protection Act of 1997 will protect consumers across the country from paying millions of dollars in unnecessary private mortgage insurance PMI premiums. This bill corrects a serious inequity faced by many first-time, middle class homeowners, and I commend Senator D'AMATO for his thoughtful approach to this problem.

No one can argue that PMI has served a useful and admirable purpose by allowing middle class families a greater opportunity for home ownership. Traditionally, mortgage lenders expect home buyers to make a down payment of at least 20 percent. For credit-worthy borrowers who lack the cash to make such a large down payment, PMI enables them to purchase a home while protecting lenders from default until the borrower has built significant equity in the home. To that end, requiring the purchase of PMI is good policy.

The problem arises when homeowners make several years of mortgage payments and reach the point where they have built up enough equity, usually 20 percent of the original value of the loan, to virtually eliminate the risk of default. At that point, the need for continued PMI coverage disappears and borrowers should have the right to cancel their policies. Yet, according to many reports in the newspapers and on TV, many uninformed borrowers continue to pay unnecessary premiums which can cost additional hundreds or even thousands of dollars each year. Others who have sought to cancel their coverage have faced unbelievable red-tape and confusion.

Senator D'AMATO's bill will eliminate these problems and make home ownership more affordable and more attainable for all Americans. Under this bill, homeowners will have the right to cancel PMI when they have accumulated 20 percent equity in their homes, the value generally determined to be sufficient to protect lenders from default. The bill takes the reasonable step of allowing the Federal Reserve the ability to grant exceptions to this rule—either to protect consumer access to credit or to protect lenders from economic factors which may create unique default