

The CHAIRMAN. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Kentucky?

There was no objection.

The CHAIRMAN. The Chair understands that the time limitation would include any amendments thereto.

Without objection, that is the order.

There was no objection.

The CHAIRMAN. The Committee will rise informally.

The SPEAKER pro tempore [Mr. BAKER] assumed the chair.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Sherman Williams, one of his secretaries.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Committee will resume its sitting.

DEPARTMENTS OF COMMERCE, JUSTICE, AND STATE, THE JUDICIARY, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1998

The Committee resumed its sitting.

(By unanimous consent, Mr. SOLOMON was allowed to speak out of order.)

AMENDMENT PROCESS FOR H.R. 1127, NATIONAL MONUMENT FAIRNESS ACT OF 1997

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Chairman, the Committee on Rules is planning to meet next Monday, September 29, to grant a rule which may limit the amendments which may be offered to H.R. 1127, the National Monument Fairness Act; that is, the Monument Antiquities Act.

Any Member who wishes to offer an amendment should submit 55 copies and a brief explanation of the amendment by noon on Monday, September 29, to the Committee on Rules, at room H-312 in the Capitol.

H.R. 1127 was ordered reported by the Committee on Resources on June 25, and the report was filed on July 21. Amendments should be drafted to the text of the bill as reported by the Committee on Resources.

Members should use the Office of Legislative Counsel to make sure that their amendments are properly drafted and should check with the Office of the Parliamentarian to be certain that their amendments comply with the Rules of the House.

Mr. Speaker, the Committee on Rules also is planning to meet the same evening, on Monday, September 29 to grant a rule which may restrict amendments for consideration of H.R. 1370, the Export-Import Bank Reauthorization bill.

Any Member contemplating any amendments should submit 55 copies of the amendment and a brief explanation to the Committee on Rules in H-312 of the Capitol no later than noon on Monday, September 29.

Amendments should be drafted to the text of the bill as reported, copies of

which will be available in the document room.

I thank the membership for their consideration.

AMENDMENT NO. 22 OFFERED BY MR. SANDERS

The CHAIRMAN. Under the previous order of the Committee, it is in order to consider amendment No. 22 offered by the gentleman from Vermont [Mr. SANDERS].

The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Amendment No. 22 offered by Mr. SANDERS: Page 38, line 22, after "\$21,700,000" insert "(increased by \$1,000,000)".

Page 54, line 11, after "\$28,490,000" insert "(reduced by \$1,000,000)".

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from Vermont [Mr. SANDERS] and the gentleman from Arizona [Mr. KOLBE] each will control 10 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Vermont [Mr. SANDERS].

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, let me at this point thank both the gentleman from Kentucky [Mr. ROGERS] and the gentleman from West Virginia [Mr. MOLLOHAN] and Members from both sides of the aisle for their commitment to fairness. I think that is the right thing to do, and I appreciate it.

Mr. Chairman, this amendment is a tripartisan amendment sponsored by progressives and conservatives, Democrats, Republicans, and an Independent.

Mr. Chairman, in my view, our current trade policy is a disaster. This year we are going to run up a \$200 billion merchandise trade deficit, the largest in our history, and it is a deficit that is going to cost us millions of decent-paying jobs. But, Mr. Chairman, as serious as the economic implications of our trade policy are, this amendment deals with an issue that is even more important.

This amendment deals with democracy and national sovereignty and the right of the American people, through their local, State and nationally elected bodies, to make legislation which the American people believe is in their best interests.

The Members of Congress who are co-sponsoring this legislation have different political points of view. We disagree on everything, but we agree that it is the people of the United States of America who should decide the important issues and not people in the World Trade Organization meeting behind closed doors in Switzerland who should make those decisions and who should override legislation that we pass, that State government passes, that local government passes.

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Briefly stated, what is some of the legislation that is being threatened, that has been threatened? The WTO, through the urging of Venezuela, forced changes in our Clean Air Act.

Mexico forced changes in the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

Southeast Asian countries have filed complaints against American restrictions on shrimp. A Massachusetts law promoting democracy in Burma, which has also been passed by many cities all over America, is now being brought before the WTO by the European Union and Japan. If Massachusetts loses that case, they must take their law off of the books or risk being punished by trade sanctions.

The bottom line here is that no matter what Members' political views are, and I disagree with Helms-Burton, voted against it, want to see it repealed, but I want to see that debate take place here in Congress, and not have somebody through the WTO overrule it. That is the issue.

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

Mr. KOLBE. Mr. Chairman, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. CRANE], the very distinguished chairman of the Subcommittee on Trade of the Committee on Ways and Means.

Mr. CRANE. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding me the time.

Mr. Chairman I rise in strong opposition to this amendment. As chairman of the authorizing subcommittee, I object to the policy which motivates the original supporters of the amendment, who feel that additional resources should be provided to the U.S. Trade Representative to identify the effect of the multilateral agreement on investments [MAI] on State and local laws. I do not believe that the funds should be used for this purpose. I am concerned about the use of these funds for any purpose which might alter the progress of the Multilateral Agreement on Investment.

The MAI is the first comprehensive multilateral agreement on investments. However, it is not entirely new. The MAI builds on over 1,000, bilateral investment treaties already in force around the world. Most of those agreements include investor-to-state dispute settlement procedures. The agreement will not force the United States to lower standards, and it will not prevent Congress from regulating the behavior of companies, nor are we agreeing to a dispute settlement process that can force changes in U.S. law. There will be no loss of sovereignty under the MAI.

This amendment would deter progress on developing international rules for investment that mirror our international rules for trade by which U.S. companies and their workers have benefited from fairness, openness, and transparency.

I therefore strongly oppose the amendment offered by the gentleman from Vermont [Mr. SANDERS], and I urge my colleagues to vote "no."

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Florida [Mr. STEARNS].

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