

Marshall County, Mississippi. Should the authority issue a favorable report, the States would then negotiate a new compact implementing the details needed to establish a 4,000 to 5,000-acre industrial park. These large tracts of land would come complete with utilities and infrastructure needed to attract and support the more sophisticated high-technology industry for which the two States already compete.

There are many potential benefits to this effort. It is hoped that by disposing of the incentive wars between the States, both Tennessee and Mississippi can capitalize on the advantages of the region that lie on both sides of their border and attract new employment and investment opportunities.

The proposed project will help develop the educational and economic opportunities needed to improve the quality of life of the people living in this area, while at the same time fulfilling the industrial growth needs of the city of Memphis and Shelby County.

Mr. Speaker, this project is non-controversial and represents an innovative approach to the mutual benefit of the two counties and the two States. It has been cosponsored by the entire Tennessee and Mississippi delegations and has passed out of the Committee on the Judiciary by voice vote. Again, I would encourage my colleagues in the House to support its passage.

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Mississippi [Mr. WICKER].

Mr. WICKER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding me the time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this resolution to prove the Chickasaw Trail Economic Development Compact. I want to thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. GEKAS] and the gentleman from New York [Mr. NADLER], the ranking member, for acting on this resolution and for allowing it to come before the House so quickly. I also want to thank my good friend, the gentleman from Tennessee [Mr. BRYANT], and the majority leader for their help.

Mr. Speaker, this may seem like a simple and straightforward bill, and it is, but the Chickasaw Trail Economic Development Compact is a very important local initiative between Marshall County, Mississippi, and Fayette County, Tennessee.

According to statistics, Marshall County, Mississippi, is economically disadvantaged, without the resources and infrastructure necessary to compete and to attract business and industry. But the people of Marshall County have viewed their present circumstances as a challenge and an opportunity. They put their heads together and came up with a long-term economic development plan to attract jobs and ensure a bright future for the next generation. Included in this vision for the future has been the development of a large industrial park in northern Marshall County, adjacent to the Tennessee line.

At the same time, Mr. Speaker, in an effort to improve the regional economy

in Tennessee, the Memphis Area Chamber of Commerce organized the Mid South Common Market, which includes the States of Tennessee and Mississippi and numerous counties around the city of Memphis.

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As a result of cooperation and consultation between economic development leaders in these two States, the idea of a regional industrial park was born. The innovative project would be a 4,000- to 5,000-acre industrial park located in both Marshall County, Mississippi, and Fayette County, Tennessee.

Mr. Speaker, I am excited about this project because it will enhance the economy of our region and improve the lives of my constituents who live in Marshall County and the surrounding area. I urge its adoption. I think it is an example of the American can-do attitude.

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, in that case, I have no further speakers. I urge the adoption of the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. GEKAS] that the House suspend the rules and pass the joint resolution, House Joint Resolution 95.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the joint resolution was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GRANTING CONSENT AND APPROVAL OF CONGRESS FOR STATE OF MARYLAND, COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA, AND DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA TO AMEND WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT REGULATION COMPACT

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 96) granting the consent and approval of Congress for the State of Maryland, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the District of Columbia to amend the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Regulation Compact.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.J. RES. 96

Whereas the State of Maryland, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the District of Columbia have adopted amendments to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Regulation Compact relating to public hearing requirements and empowering transit police officers to carry weapons issued by WMATA while in an off-duty status, consistent with limitations imposed by the applicable political subdivision; and

Whereas the Congress has reviewed such amendments and is willing to consent to such amendments: Now therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in

Congress assembled, That consent of Congress is hereby given to the amendments of the State of Maryland (Chapter 489, 1996 Laws of the Maryland General Assembly and Chapter 91 and 699, 1997 Laws of the Maryland General Assembly), the amendments of the Commonwealth of Virginia (Chapter 150, 1995 Acts of Assembly of Virginia), and the amendments of the District of Columbia (D.C. Law 11-443) to sections 62 and 76 of title III of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Regulation Compact. Such amendments are as follows:

(1) Section 62(a) is amended to read as follows:

“(a) The Board shall not raise any fare or rate, nor implement a major service reduction, except after holding a public hearing with respect thereto.”

(2) Section 62(c) is amended to read as follows:

“(c) The Board shall give at least fifteen days' notice for all public hearings. The notice shall be given by publication in a newspaper of daily circulation throughout the Transit Zone and such notice shall be published once a week for two successive weeks. The notice period shall start with the first day of publication. Notices of public hearings shall be posted in accordance with regulations promulgated by the Board.”

(3) Section 76(b) is amended to read as follows:

“(b) A member of the Metro Transit Police shall have the same powers, including the power of arrest, and shall be subject to the same limitations, including regulatory limitations, in the performance of his duties as a member of the duly constituted police force of the political subdivision in which the Metro Transit Police member is engaged in the performance of his duties. A member of the Metro Transit Police is authorized to carry and use only such weapons, including handguns, as are issued by the Authority. A member of the Metro Transit Police is subject to such additional limitations in the use of weapons as are imposed on the duly constituted police force for the political subdivision in which he is engaged in the performance of his duties.”

(4) Section 76(e) is amended to read as follows:

“(e) The Authority shall have the power to adopt rules and regulations for the safe, convenient, and orderly use of the transit facilities owned, controlled, or operated by the Authority, including the payment and the manner of the payment of fares or charges therefor, the protection of the transit facilities, the control of traffic and parking upon the transit facilities, and the safety and protection of the riding public. In the event that any such rules and regulations contravene the laws, ordinances, rules, or regulations of a signatory or any political subdivision thereof which are existing or subsequently enacted, these laws, ordinances, rules, or regulations of the signatory or the political subdivision shall apply and the conflicting rule or regulation, or portion thereof, of the Authority shall be void within the jurisdiction of that signatory or political subdivision. In all other respects, the rules and regulations of the Authority shall be uniform throughout the Transit Zone. The rules or regulations established under this subsection shall be adopted by the Board following public hearings held in accordance with section 62(c) and (d) of this Compact. The final regulation shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation within the Zone at least 15 days before its effective date. Any person violating any rule or regulation of the Authority shall be subject to arrest and, upon conviction by a court of competent jurisdiction, shall pay a fine of not more than two hundred fifty dollars (\$250) and costs. Criminal violations of any rule or regulation of

the Authority shall be prosecuted by the signatory or political subdivision in which the violation occurred, in the same manner by which violations of law, ordinances, rules, and regulations of the signatory or political subdivisions are prosecuted."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. GEKAS] and the gentleman from New York [Mr. NADLER] each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. GEKAS].

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on this joint resolution.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of H.J. Res. 96. Just as in the previous case, this is to consider a compact in time among the entities of Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia as it pertains to agreements reached by those entities with respect to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Regulation Compact.

Each one of these entities is a signatory, and by reason of the Constitution, the Congress has to approve the agreements that have been reached. This compact, adopted in 1967, created the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority to plan, finance, construct and operate a comprehensive public transit system for metropolitan Washington D.C. In addition to a subway system connecting the three jurisdictions, WMATA administers an extensive surface transportation network throughout the area.

The Metro Transit Police Department, established in 1976, now numbers 300 sworn members with responsibility for public safety and security on Metro transit facilities. The chairman of WMATA's board of directors, Mr. Jack Evans, gave us some idea of the considerable nature of the department's workload in testimony before the subcommittee when he noted that in the last 3 years, transit officers had issued 12,197 criminal citations and arrested 3,623 individuals for various violations.

As noted, the amendments have already been agreed to by the three jurisdictions who are signatories to the compact. The first amendment modifies the public hearing process relating to fare increases and changes in service to bring it into conformity with other transit properties that follow Federal Transit Administration guidance. Under the amendment, the Authority will continue to be required to hold public hearings on proposals to raise fares or to implement major service reductions. The amendment would eliminate the need for public hearings for minor service changes and thus give the Authority more flexibility to re-

spond quickly to ridership needs. Fifteen days' notice would be required for public hearings, with newspaper publication still required, but other required manner of posting such notice to be established by regulation.

The second amendment removes language from the compact restricting WMATA Metro Transit Police to carrying service weapons while on duty or in direct transit to and from duty assignment. The amendment would allow transit police to join other State and local area police officers who are authorized to carry weapons during off-duty hours. They will, however, continue to be subject to any additional restrictions with respect to use of weapons as imposed on the duly constituted police for the political subdivision in which they are engaged for performance of their duties. Transit police will be allowed possession of an Authority-issued weapon only.

The final amendment merely clarifies the process by which certain WMATA regulations are established, setting out the responsibility of the board to hold public hearings and to publish adopted regulations for conduct on its property at least 15 days before the effective date of such regulations.

Mr. Speaker, I know of no controversy associated with this joint resolution, and I urge its adoption by the House.

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

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

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

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, like the last resolution, this resolution gives the consent of Congress to the changes in a local compact, in this case the Washington Metro compact agreed to by Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia; provides for a number of different changes, and the changes have been approved by all three jurisdictions.

Currently, the Metro Transit Police is the only local police force in the tri-State area not authorized to carry either their own weapons or another approved weapon except while on duty. Two jurisdictions, the Metropolitan Police and the Prince George's County Police, require police to carry their firearms when not on duty. The U.S. Park Police and U.S. Capitol Police have the option of carrying a firearm when not on duty.

The current compact allows Metro Transit Police officers to carry their service firearms only while on duty in the system and in direct transit to and from work. The change that we are proposing here would allow the officer to carry the service-issued firearm while off duty, subject to the restrictions placed on local police forces in each jurisdiction while the officer is in that jurisdiction.

A second change would require a public hearing only to raise a fare or rate

or to make a major service reduction. The current compact requires there be a public hearing for any fare change, even presumably a reduction in the fare, or for the establishment or abandonment of any service, no matter how minor, with few exceptions.

The notice period for a public hearing is reduced herein from 30 to 15 days, and the requirement that notices be posted in Authority offices, stations, and rolling stock is eliminated. The requirement is retained that the notice be published in a newspaper of general circulation at least once a week for 2 weeks, and further, as the Board may prescribe through regulations.

Finally, the changes provide that criminal violations of any rule or regulation of the Metro shall be prosecuted in accordance with the laws of the jurisdiction in which the violation occurred.

Mr. Speaker, one or two of the changes gives some pause to me, and if this were proposed for the New York City system, I am not so sure I would support it. But since I believe that Congress ought to allow, when there is unanimous agreement among local jurisdictions, two States and the District of Columbia, we should defer to their wisdom. I urge the adoption of this bill.

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

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. DAVIS], who has been of immense help in producing this moment.

Mr. DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my friend the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. GEKAS] for yielding me the time, and I appreciate his efforts to move this to the floor before adjournment.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the proposed amendments to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, WMATA, Interstate Compact. The amendments under consideration have been enacted by all signatories of the WMATA compact, Virginia, Maryland and District of Columbia. The Bipartisan Area Delegation is seeking congressional consent to the proposed amendments, which passed the Committee on the Judiciary by voice vote earlier this year.

The amendments would allow the Authority to conduct its business more efficiently and effectively. This is an effort to streamline the Authority's practices and to provide for an enhanced level of protection for the Transit Authority's police officers. The amendments will both protect the public right to have input in the region's transit decision-making process as well as enhance the public safety throughout the region.

To be more specific, the first amendment modifies the Authority's current public hearing process relating to fare increases and changes in transit service. The proposal will bring the Authority into conformity with other transit properties that follow Federal

public hearing standards that have been in place since 1982. Currently the Authority's public hearing practices are far broader than Federal guidelines and inhibits the ability of the Transit Authority to respond to market changes in an efficient businesslike manner.

Under the proposed amendments, the Authority will continue to be required to hold public hearings on proposals to raise fares or implement major service reductions. However, the Authority will not be required to hold public hearings for minor service changes, thus enabling WMATA to adjust to the needs of the riding public in a quick fashion.

The other major change to the WMATA compact is removal of compact language that currently limits WMATA's transit police to carrying their service weapon only when they are on duty or in direct transit to and from duty assignments. Consent to the proposal will allow the transit police to join every other police force in the region, including the Capitol Hill police, in authorizing its officers to carry weapons during off-duty hours.

As the former chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, I can tell my colleagues that the transit police are among the best-trained forces in the region. They deserve to have the ability to defend themselves during off-duty hours. It is an unfortunate reality that the transit police are also dealing with a violence-prone criminal element who sometimes seek revenge after they have been apprehended. We need to respect the transit police, authorize them to carry their weapons that they have been trained to use, and trust that the extensive training that the transit police receive will serve them well if they are confronted during off-duty hours.

These amendments are important to the daily workings of the Washington Metropolitan Transit Authority and the safety of its police officers. I urge my colleagues to support this consent resolution.

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

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. MORAN].

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. GEKAS], the gentleman from New York [Mr. NADLER], as well as the distinguished gentleman from Virginia [Mr. DAVIS], who just spoke, have adequately described what this bill will do. So out of consideration for the pressing time demands of the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. MURTHA], I will keep my remarks as brief as possible.

I will only say that this is a common-sense bill that will save time and money. It will improve customer service and security for those who use the Washington Metropolitan Transit system. I commend the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. DAVIS] for getting it on the consent calendar. I urge all of my colleagues to pass it unanimously.

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia [Ms. NORTON].

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New York [Mr. NADLER] for yielding me the time.

I thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. GEKAS] and the gentleman from New York [Mr. NADLER] for the way in which they have expeditiously moved this bill forward. I thank the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. DAVIS] for his bill.

The streamline procedures which this bill would provide are precisely the way to improve the efficiency of this vital regional facility. The provision that would allow Metro Transit officers to carry their weapons while off duty is a common-sense use to correct what is surely a waste of skilled person power when these officers are not allowed to carry their weapons with them off duty.

My own D.C. coordination bill would seek to in many ways do the same thing for other Federal officers. This is a high-efficiency bill. I urge all of my colleagues to support it.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. GEKAS] that the House suspend the rules and pass the joint resolution, H.J. Res. 96.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the joint resolution was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2159, FOREIGN OPERATIONS, EXPORT FINANCING, AND RELATED PROGRAMS APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1998

Mr. DIAZ-BALART, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 105-402) on the resolution (H. Res. 323) waiving points of order against the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 2159) making appropriations for foreign operations, export financing, and related programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1998, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up H.R. 323 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 323

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 2159) making appropriations for foreign operations, export financing, and related programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1998, and for other purposes. All

points of order against the conference report and against its consideration are waived. The conference report shall be considered as read.

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The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CALVERT). The gentleman from Florida [Mr. DIAZ-BALART] is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. HALL], pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 323 is a standard rule for a conference report. It waives points of order against the conference report to accompany H.R. 2159, the foreign operations, commonly known as foreign aid, appropriations bill for fiscal year 1998 and against its consideration. In addition, the rule provides that the conference report shall be considered as read.

Mr. Speaker, many of our colleagues may remember this bill from July when it was considered on the House floor. We made every effort to allow for the consideration by the entire House of almost every amendment submitted to the Committee on Rules. I believe that we have a balanced product in this conference report, and I will defer to the gentleman from Alabama [Mr. CALLAHAN], the chairman of the Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, Export Financing and Related Programs, to answer questions about the details of the conference report we have before us and the compromises that have been reached to complete the conference report.

Some matters have been dropped from this legislation, Mr. Speaker, that I believe strongly should not have been dropped, but this is a must-pass bill that I believe we need to pass tonight, and I think it is a good piece of legislation on this critical area that we bring before the House. I thank the gentleman from Alabama [Mr. CALLAHAN], the chairman, and the gentlewoman from California [Ms. PELOSI], the ranking member, for their hard work on this important bill. I urge adoption of the rule and the conference report.

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

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Florida [Mr. DIAZ-BALART] for yielding me the time, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H. Res. 323 is obviously a rule that provides for consideration of the conference report on H.R. 2159, which is the bill that makes appropriations for foreign operations, export financing, and related programs in the fiscal year 1998. As the gentleman from Florida described, this rule waives all points of order. It provides 1 hour of general debate equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations.