INTRODUCTION OF BILL TO ENSURE ZIP CODE ALLOCATION

HON. STEPHEN HORN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 6, 1998

Mr. HORN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce a bill, H.R. 4429, that would ensure fairness in Zip code allocation. This issue was brought to my attention by the ongoing plight of one city in my district—that of the city of Signal Hill. Signal Hill is a bustling community of over 9,000 residents located in Southern California, surrounded completely by the city of Long Beach. Unfortunately, this community's growth and economic expansion are hampered by the three way division of the city among Zip codes. While the issuance of five little numbers may not seem like a big deal to many of those in Washington, it is of paramount importance to this community back home.

This division results in mail addressing and delivery problems and higher insurance rates for residents. It is unfair at best and inefficient at worst to punish residents of Signal Hill with unnecessarily high costs simply because the Postal Service mandated this division without any input from this active community. I have worked with the U.S. Postal Service to find a solution to this issue that benefits both parties, however I am afraid we have come to an impasse. The Postal Service refuses to allocate a unique Zip code to this city despite the overwhelming evidence that Signal Hill needs and deserves its own Zip code. The time has come for a new approach to this ongoing problem.

I introduced H.R. 4429 which today would ensure that all cities like Signal Hill can count on efficient mail service and a distinct community identity. It says any city with a population of at least 5,000 residents that is completely surrounded by another city would not have to share its Zip code with any other city. This legislation takes the politics out of Postal Service decisionmaking and institutes instead, a straightforward, fair system for Zip code allocation. H.R. 4429 will put an end to years of delivery problems, community identification problems, and insurance rate problems. Simply put, an economically independent community shouldn't be forced to share its identity with any other city simply due to geography and the failure of the Postal Service to make the right decisions. The city of Signal Hill is a distinct and viable city and deserves to be recognized as such. The passage of H.R. 4429 will assure that.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that the text of H.R. 4429 be printed at this point in the RECORD.

H.R. 4429

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

SECTION 1. ZIP CODE REQUIREMENT.

(a) REQUIREMENT.—Effective 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, no ZIP code that is assigned to a city (or portion of a city) that is completely surrounded by any other city may also be assigned to any area outside of the city so surrounded.

(b) DEFINITION.—For purposes of this section, the term ''city'' means any unit of general local government that is classified as a city, town, or municipality by the Bureau of the Census, and within the boundaries of which 5,000 or more individuals reside.

INTRODUCTION OF THE YEAR 2000 READINESS DISCLOSURE ACT

HON. DAVID DREIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 6, 1998

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, by now most Americans know about the Year 2000 computer problem and understand that if preventive steps aren't taken, computer failures may cause serious problems. To mitigate the severity of the problem, Congress must not only act to ensure that the Federal Government's mission critical computers can function on January 1, 2000, but that the private sector can use all of the tools at its disposal to prevent unnecessary Year 2000 computer failures. Today I've joined with a number of colleagues from both sides of the aisle to introduce a modest, targeted measure to do just that.

I want to commend the President for calling attention to an important part of the Year 2000 problem for private sector firms. Many companies are afraid that the information they share about their Year 2000 readiness and their efforts to become Year 2000-compliant will later be used against them in civil suits. While the President submitted a bill intended to encourage information-sharing by preventing some of this information from being used in subsequent suits, his proposal is crafted so narrowly that it really won't make any difference. The bipartisan ''Year 2000 Readiness Disclosure Act,'' which I introduced today, gives companies the liability protection they need to make statements about Year 2000 compliance efforts, knowing that they're not just pouring gasoline onto some litigation bonfire.

The Year 2000 Readiness Disclosure Act is by no means the last word on the subject. I look forward to working with the administration and committees of jurisdiction to make it better. In particular, I would support language to clarify that firms working together to minimize Year 2000 problems and promote Y2K compliance are not in violation of antitrust laws. Furthermore, starting this fall and moving into next year, it's critical that Congress address the problem of liability for Year 2000 failures themselves. Legal analysts are already anticipating that the total litigation burden for Year 2000 failure suits will climb into the hundreds of billions of dollars. Congress and the President need to work together to make sure that companies are concentrating on preventing Year 2000 failures, not protecting themselves from wasteful suits after they've occurred.

While I'm not an alarmist, Year 2000 failures have the potential to have a significant impact on the economy of the United States and the world. Just as a stitch in time saves nine, Congress can prevent a lot of headaches down the road by passing legislation that's carefully crafted to encourage companies to share information now.

INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION TO SIMPLIFY THE CHILD CREDIT

HON. RICHARD E. NEAL

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 6, 1998

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing legislation which will simplify the child credit in a revenue neutral manner. Over the past three years, the tax code has become unbelievably complex for the average individual taxpayer. The capital gains form that was part of last year's Federal income tax return is only the first installment. The next installment will be the extraordinarily complex child credit form that will be required on next year's tax return. In a recent article in the Wall Street Journal, a tax expert stated that many people ''will be totally overwhelmed'' by required forms.

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has released proof copies of the 1998 child tax credit worksheet. These forms are extremely complicated. Some will be quick to blame the IRS for the complexity of the forms. In fact the IRS is merely the messenger. The complexity of the forms is the result of deliberate decisions last year by the Republican majority in Congress.

Taxpayers will find out next spring that the two-page child tax credit work sheet is difficult to fill out and time consuming. Claiming the child credit goes beyond filling out the child credit forms. Additional calculations and forms are required.

Under current law, all taxpayers who claim the child credit with incomes above $45,000 for joint filers and $33,750 for single filers will have to make at least a rudimentary minimum tax calculation. Many of these taxpayers will also have to fill out the full alternative minimum tax (AMT) form. In addition, large groups of taxpayers such as self-employed and individuals who have a capital gain distribution from a mutual fund will have to fill out the full AMT form regardless of their income level.

The Internal Revenue Service has not completed an analysis on the amount of time it will take to complete the new child credit forms, but the Internal Revenue Service has completed a time analysis for completing the AMT form which will be required for many taxpayers claiming the child credit. It takes approximately 5 hours to complete this form. Not only will the taxpayer have to spend time on this form, many will have to fill out the Schedule D form for capital gains twice. The IRS estimates that it takes 5 hours and 20 minutes to fill out this 54-line form.

Not only is the AMT complicated, it can penalize taxpayers with middle-income who claim some of the new tax credits such as child credit and the Hope scholarship credit. In 1998, tax policymakers estimate that the minimum tax will cause roughly 700,000 taxpayers to fail to receive the full benefits of nonrefundable personal credits. This number is expected to increase drastically because AMT thresholds are not indexed for inflation. By 2007, the AMT will cause approximately 8 million people to lose some of the benefits of the nonrefundable personal credits.

The following example shows the interaction between the child credit and the AMT. A married couple with 3 children and 1 child in college have a gross income of $67,000. They claim the family credit for a $1,000 and the Hope credit for $500 and this totals $1,500 in credits. They are required to pay the minimum tax and the minimum tax disallows $1,477 of their credits.

My legislation simplifies the child tax credit and other personal nonrefundable credits such as the new education tax credits in the Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997 by eliminating their interaction with the AMT. The legislation allows nonpersonal refundable credits against the minimum tax. Under current law, a taxpayer with three or more children is allowed a

partially refundable child credit and my legislation also simplifies this partially refundable credit by repealing the provision which reduces the credit by AMT liability.

In order to eliminate the complexities of the AMT for nonfundable credits and the child credit for families with three or more children, and to have revenue neutral legislation, the income limits for the beginning of the phase-out of the child credit have to be reduced from $110,000 to $89,000 for joint filers and $75,000 to $60,000 for single filers. Even with this reduction in the thresholds for the child credit, the thresholds are still higher than the thresholds which were included in last year's House Democratic substitute.

My legislation simplifies the child credit for all taxpayers. The vast majority of Americans will have a modest tax reduction or will not be affected. I urge my colleagues to join me in cosponsoring this legislation. Proposing such legislation is not without risk—opponents can distort it for political purposes. However, I believe that it is important to propose constructive solution to problems. The complexity of the child credit is a problem that needs to be addressed.

DEPARTMENTS OF COMMERCE, JUSTICE, AND STATE, AND JUDICIARY AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1999

SPEECH OF

HON. LOUIS STOKES

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, August 5, 1998

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4276) making appropriations for the Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State, the Judiciary, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1999, and for other purposes.

Mr. STOKES. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong support of the Mollohan census amendment to H.R. 4276, the FY 1999 Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State, the Judiciary, and related agencies, appropriations bill.

This important measure will remove language in the bill that withholds half of the FY 1999 appropriation for the decennial census until future legislation releasing the funds is enacted. By avoiding the risk of a census shutdown, the Bureau can proceed without hindering its ability to prepare for the most accurate census possible.

Americans want, and deserve, an accurate census conducted with the latest scientific methods and technology available. However, the recent census was the first census enumeration to be less accurate than its predecessor. It is estimated the 1990 census undercount, of which 8.8 million people were not included, was 33 percent less accurate than that of the 1980 census. Subsequently, 4 times as many blacks, 5 times as many Hispanics, American Indians, and non-Hispanic whites, and 2 times as many Asians and Pacific Islanders were not included.

As the U.S. Census Bureau prepares for the largest peace-time mobilization effort undertaken by the Government, we must apply modern scientific sampling methods to ensure a more accurate census.

The census is a constitutional requirement for the reapportionment of the House of Representatives. An accurate census is also absolutely essential for a fair distribution of Federal funding for roads, transit systems, schools, senior citizens centers, health care facilities, and children's programs, including Head Start and the school lunch program. With such services and resources at stake for our urban communities and rural areas, we must be mindful of the human capital costs involved with an ''undercount'' of the population.

In 1991, Congress directed the Secretary of Commerce and the National Academy of Science (NAS) to determine the most scientifically accurate and cost-effective means of conducting the decennial census. The National Academy of Science panel concluded that statistical sampling would fulfill such criteria. These findings were echoed in 1992 and 1996 reports from a second panel of experts who stated that sampling is critical to the success of the 2000 census.

The Mollohan amendment directs the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) to review the Census Bureau's plans and determine if they are consistent with recommendations made by the academy in response to bipartisan legislation enacted in 1991. By enlisting the aid of the academy, the U.S. Census Bureau can refine and improve their techniques in order to attain a more accurate census.

The Bureau's ''census 2000 plan'' has been endorsed by the American Statistical Association, the American Demographics Association, and virtually all other professional organizations concerned with the census.

Mr. Chairman, the Congress must ensure that adequate and timely funding is available for the task of determining our Nation's population. Any delay in funding to fulfill our constitutional obligation would delay and place in jeopardy many of the planning requirements necessary for an accurate census. By removing the six month cap on funding for census 2000, the Congress will enable the Bureau to continue its preparations for its most important task ahead.

Mr. Chairman, I ask my colleagues to ensure that progress will continue toward the most fair, accurate, and inclusive census in our Nation's history. Support the Mollohan amendment.

IN HONOR OF THE CHURCH OF ST. CLARENCE

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 6, 1998

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Church of St. Clarence.

St. Clarence Church has served as a welcoming community for the citizens of North Olmsted for twenty years. Bishop James E. Hickey named the Church of St. Clarence in memory of his immediate predecessor, Bishop Clarence Issenman. He designated Reverend Thomas A. Flynn as its founding pastor in June, 1978.

The Church of St. Clarence consists of the Parish School of Religion, the Gathering Room and St. Kevin's Chapel. St. Clarence uses these three components to achieve a mission statement that calls for opportunity, education, and friendship among its community's members. St. Clarence provides its members with opportunities to worship God by offering the Eucharist on a daily basis at St. Kevin's Chapel. St. Clarence's Parish School of Religion hopes to educate and nurture all its members by making available classes in religion, including those of bible study. The Gathering Room promotes a community of prayer and friendship by providing a place for members to meet outside of regular church hours for extra-curricular activities. The Church of St. Clarence clearly meets the needs of all its members.

The population of St. Clarence's Parish has grown significantly since its first beginnings in 1978. I stand here today in reassurance that St. Clarence will continue to grow and serve every one of its members, past and future, with the same commitment and the same faith that has helped it develop into the thriving community it is today. Once again, congratulations and God Bless!

DEPARTMENTS OF COMMERCE, JUSTICE, AND STATE, AND JUDICIARY, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1999

SPEECH OF

HON. DEBORAH PRYCE

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, August 5, 1998

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4276) making appropriations for the Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State, the Judiciary, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1999, and for other purposes:

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong support of the amendment offered by my fellow Buckeye State colleague, Mr. TRAFICANT, and I commend him for his leadership on this issue.

All families in Ohio, which include my constituents in and around Columbus, were placed in serious harm's way as a result of the recent breakout of six inmates from the Northeast Ohio Correctional Center located in Youngstown. Five of the escapees were murderers who had been transferred to Youngstown by the District of Columbia.

We are all a little bit relieved to know that, thanks to excellent law enforcement, five of the six inmates have been caught, but one remains at large and remains a menace to all citizens of this country.

Mr. Chairman, what is particularly alarming about this situation is that some of those murderers who escaped had absolutely no business being transferred by the District of Columbia to the Youngstown facility, which is designed to house medium risk criminals—not the extremely violent, high-risk variety like those thugs who escaped. This situation is unacceptable, and the people of Ohio will not stand for it.

Who is responsible for this? One thing appears certain, the District of Columbia agreed only to transfer medium-risk criminals to Youngstown. Yet, in the words of the director of the D.C. Corrections Department, many of the prisoners transferred by the District of Columbia to Youngstown were inmates who had