

I will be attending to official business in my congressional district.

Had I been present, I would have voted "yes."

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, today on roll-call vote 420, I voted "yes." I intended to vote "no."

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SAXTON. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 2863.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. EMERSON). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Jersey?

There was no objection.

GUADALUPE-HIDALGO TREATY LAND CLAIMS ACT OF 1998

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Madam Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 522, and I ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 522

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 1(b) of rule XXIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2538) to establish a Presidential commission to determine the validity of certain land claims arising out of the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo of 1848 involving the descendants of persons who were Mexican citizens at the time of the treaty. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. Points of order against consideration of the bill for failure to comply with section 303(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Resources. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. It shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Resources now printed in the bill, modified by striking the last two sentences of subsection (c) of section 6. Each section of that amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read. During consideration of the bill for amendment, the Chairman of the Committee of the Whole may accord priority in recognition on the basis of whether the Member offering an amendment has caused it to be printed in the portion of the Congressional Record designated for that purpose in clause 6 of rule XXIII. Amendments so printed shall be considered as read. The Chairman of the Committee of the Whole may: (1) postpone until a time during further consideration in the Committee of the Whole a request for a recorded vote on any amendment; and (2) reduce to five minutes the minimum time for electronic voting on any postponed question

that follows another electronic vote without intervening business, provided that the minimum time for electronic voting on the first in any series of questions shall be 15 minutes. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. Any Member may demand a separate vote in the House on any amendment adopted in the Committee of the Whole to the bill or to the amendment in the nature of a substitute made in order as original text. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Washington (Mr. HASTINGS) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Madam Speaker, for purposes of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the distinguished gentlewoman from New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, during consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

(Mr. HASTINGS of Washington asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Madam Speaker, H. Res. 522 is an open rule providing 1 hour of general debate to be equally divided between the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Resources.

The rule waives points of order against the consideration of the bill for failure to comply with section 303(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974. The rule makes in order as an original bill for purposes of amendment the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Resources now printed in the bill, as modified, and considered as read.

The rule further permits the Chair to accord priority in recognition to Members who have preprinted their amendments in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD and considers them as read.

In addition, the rule allows the Chair to postpone recorded votes and reduce to 5 minutes the minimum time for electronic voting on any postponed votes, provided voting time on the first in a series of questions shall be not less than 5 minutes.

Finally, the rule provides for one motion to recommit, with or without instructions.

Madam Speaker, H.R. 2538 establishes the Guadalupe-Hidalgo Treaty Land Claims Commission to review petitions from eligible descendants regarding the validity of certain land claims in New Mexico arising from the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo of 1848.

In order to be eligible for consideration under this act, petitions by eligible descendants must be filed within 5 years of the bill's enactment.

This legislation was reported by the Committee on Resources by voice vote on May 20, 1998. The Congressional

Budget Office estimates that implementing the bill will cost approximately \$1 million per year over the fiscal year 1999-2003 period. The bill may affect direct spending, so pay-as-you-go procedures will apply. However, CBO estimates that any such effects will total less than \$500,000 per year.

Madam Speaker, this legislation is sponsored by our colleague the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. REDMOND) representative and was originally introduced by our former colleague, the Honorable Bill Richardson. It is strongly supported by the New Mexico delegation and, accordingly, I encourage my colleagues to support both the rule and H.R. 2538.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Ms. SLAUGHTER asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Washington (Mr. HASTINGS) for yielding me the customary 30 minutes.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of this open rule and urge my colleagues to support it so that all potential improvements to this legislation may be considered.

The underlying bill establishes a presidential commission to make recommendations to resolve land claims in New Mexico by descendants of people who were Mexican citizens when the treaty ending the Mexican-American War was signed in 1848.

The bill also authorizes the establishment of a research center to assist the commission and authorizes \$1 million annually in fiscal year 1999 through fiscal year 2007 for the purpose of carrying out the activities of the commission and the center.

Opponents of the bill argue that it contains numerous flaws and fails to deal with the substantive questions raised by the land claims and opens the door to numerous future land claims. The bill fails to specify exactly which lands in New Mexico are eligible for consideration, since portions of New Mexico were acquired in the Louisiana Purchase, the annexation of Texas, as well as the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo.

Furthermore, the treaty covered all or parts of several other Western States. Thus, the bill also opens the door to numerous potential land claims down the road in all of these other States.

The bill contains no legal standards or rules of evidence by which the commission is to judge any claim that is brought forth. As a quasi-judicial body, there are potential conflicts of interest in having eligible descendants serving as members of the commission, and with the commission being able to accept gifts, especially from those who may benefit from the commission's decisions.