

with it. But every now and then it pays off to have a congressman in your family.

Today is one of those days. On December 7, 1998, Mike Gerro and Jan Barton Gerro had a beautiful baby daughter, Whitney Elizabeth Gerro. They have written this poem to announce her arrival to the world, and I want to read it for my colleagues here in the House. It is entitled, "A Special Arrival."

She's an angel of sweetness
A treasure of love
A beautiful blessing
From heaven above.
A daughter adored.
Who with nurture will grow.
What a pleasure to welcome
Whitney Elizabeth Gerro.

She really is a blessing. She had her baptism this past Sunday in Arlington, Texas. I am very, very proud to be one of her uncles.

THE REPUBLICAN PARTY WORKS DILIGENTLY TO PROTECT SOCIAL SECURITY

(Mr. KINGSTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, the Republican Party is working very diligently and very intensely with the Senate to try to protect social security. We have a lot of concerns about the President's proposal, which only protects or earmarks 62 percent of the social security trust fund dollars for social security.

Many of us believe that we should put 100 percent of social security dollars into social security and not spend it on any other program; not for roads, not for bridges, not for congressional salaries, not for anything else. We hope that we can get the President to come around to our way of thinking.

We also feel that we need to pay down the debt. We have a debt of \$5.4 trillion. Which costs the American families, on an average for a family of four, about \$2,000 dollars a year. That is \$2,000 for a college tuition, for house payments, for a nice vacation, for a car, whatever the need of the family is. Now it just goes to interest on the debt. It does not even pay down the principal.

These are things we think the President's budget ignores. We want to put it on the table. We are working in that direction. I hope that the President will decide to join us.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 603, CLARIFYING THE APPLICATION OF THE "DEATH ON THE HIGH SEAS ACT" TO AVIATION INCIDENTS

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 85 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 85

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 603) to amend title 49, United States code, to clarify the application of the Act popularly known as the "Death on the High Seas Act" to aviation incidents. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. 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 Transportation and Infrastructure. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. Each section of the bill 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 8 of rule XVIII. 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. 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 (Mr. FOLEY). The gentleman from Washington (Mr. HASTINGS) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, for purposes of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the distinguished 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 purposes of debate only.

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

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 85 is an open rule providing 1 hour of general debate. It would be equally divided and controlled between the chairman and the ranking member of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

The rule provides that each section of the bill shall be considered as read. Furthermore, the rule authorizes the Chair to accord priority in recognition to members who have preprinted their amendments in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

The rule also permits the chairman of the Committee of the Whole to postpone votes during consideration of the

bill, and to reduce voting time to 5 minutes on a postponed question if the vote follows a 15-minute vote. Finally, the rule provides for 1 motion to recommit, with or without instructions.

Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 603, reported by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, would clarify that the Death on the High Seas Act shall not be the controlling law in lawsuits arising from aviation crashes into the high seas.

The purpose of this legislation is to ensure that families of passengers killed in airline disasters are not treated differently under law depending on whether the aircraft crashed over land or water.

This discrepancy arises from a Supreme Court ruling in *Zicherman versus Korean Airlines* that applied the Death on the High Seas Act to lawsuits related to crashes over the ocean. Under the Death on the High Seas Act, Mr. Speaker, families are denied the ability to seek compensation in a court of law for such noneconomic factors as a loss of companionship of a loved one, relatives' pain and suffering, or for punitive damages. Under existing law, for example, parents receive virtually no compensation in the death of a child. On the other hand, if a plane crashes over land, State tort laws usually apply, offering a broader range of legal remedies to surviving family members.

Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SHERWOOD) and his colleagues on the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure have made this legislation an early priority this session, and have requested an open rule, which was granted by the Committee on Rules without dissent.

Accordingly, I encourage my colleagues to support House Resolution 85, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, this is an open rule. It will allow for full and fair debates on H.R. 603. As my colleague has described, it will allow for 1 hour of general debate, to be equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. The rule permits amendments under the 5-minute rule, which is the normal amending process in the House. All Members on both sides of the aisle will have the opportunity to offer germane amendments.

H.R. 603 would allow the families of ocean plane crash victims the same rights to file lawsuits as when the crash takes place on land. It was introduced in response to TWA Flight 800, which crashed off the coast of New York in 1996. In 1997, the House passed a similar bill by a voice vote under suspension of the rules, but the Senate failed to take action on the bill.

This is an open rule. It was adopted by a voice vote of the Committee on Rules. I urge adoption of the rule and of the bill.