

the people who want to have the town meetings can but with some limitations so that one or a few Senators do not take too much of the fund. Therefore, we could move in the direction of encouraging these open house town meetings.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. BENNETT. I thank the Senator from Pennsylvania for raising this issue because it is a very legitimate issue, and I think it is a legitimate issue for the legislative branch subcommittee to deal with. We did not deal with it in subcommittee and in full committee. It becomes a challenge to try to find the money right now in terms of an offset within the bill.

The point the Senator from Pennsylvania makes is an extremely valid one. There are people who, in rural areas particularly, do not really have any sense of opportunity to interact with a Senator unless that Senator physically goes to those counties. Then when you try to notify the people that you are coming, you have a real challenge because they do not have the mass media coverage. Yes, they may get a major newspaper from a major metropolitan area, but they do not read it for hometown announcements. If you try local newspapers, many times they do not do the job, either.

The problem we have in terms of the reactions from members of the Rules Committee is that the Rules Committee has attempted to create the opportunity for this in terms of flexibility for the overall budget and saying to a Senator, "You have a pot of money you can use either for franking or for stationery, for travel, or some other item," and they are opposed to earmarking a particular amount of money for this particular purpose.

If we sit down with members of the Rules Committee and lay out the importance of what it is the Senator from Pennsylvania is highlighting and talk it through to find some creative way, I think we can move in that direction. I pledge to the Senator from Pennsylvania that I will work with him to see if we cannot do that because I agree absolutely with the end he is trying to achieve.

I think it is very important that we try to help Members communicate with their constituents in a meaningful kind of way.

As I understand it, from the Senator from Pennsylvania, this is not talking about a mass mailing of campaign literature, as we are accused of doing under newsletters and use of the franking. This is talking about simply a notice that would go out under the frank with respect to town meetings.

I am very sympathetic with that and would be happy to work with the Senator and the Senators from the Rules Committee and, of course, Senator FEINSTEIN, to see if we can't find a way to devise something that is not overly expensive—because I agree with the Senator, not every Senator would want

to use it—but that at the same time we could provide an opportunity for those Senators who would be willing to do the town meeting.

So I am happy to deal with the Senator to see if we can't find way to work this out.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the Senator from California.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, in response to Chairman BENNETT's suggestion, I would like to assure the Senator from Pennsylvania, as a member of the Rules Committee, I would be very happy to take a look at this and see what the problem is. The ranking member of the Rules Committee was here and is familiar with the subject. I believe he would be agreeable, as well, to take a look. And we will see what the problem is.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Utah and the Senator from California for those statements. Let us proceed on that basis.

Picking up on what the Senator from Utah said, it isn't a political mailing touting what any of us may think he or she has done. It is notice that the Senator is going to have his or her body at a given place.

As open house town meetings go, that can be a fairly high price to pay, to go out and face the music and face the constituents because they do keep track of our votes. But they have a very hard time following us if they live in Coudersport in Potter County or live in the northern tier of Pennsylvania or a southern tier county such as Fulton. They don't necessarily get any of the major newspapers and are outside television range. They may see some national television, but that is not an effective way for Senators to communicate with the people of their States.

When you appear at a town meeting, there is a feeling that something is going on that is positive. We Members of Congress in the Senate and the House are subject to a lot of criticism as being "inside the beltway" and not being accessible. People don't know what we are doing. And then we are going to these fundraisers where people have to make contributions to have access to us.

This is something which is not very healthy for a democracy. So let us proceed.

I will not offer an amendment at this time. I will see if we can work it out, starting with the chairman and ranking member on this subcommittee, and moving over to the chairman and ranking member on the Rules Committee, to try to structure a program which would accomplish the purpose and be affordable.

I thank the Senator from Utah and the Senator from California.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. BENNETT. I thank the Senator from Pennsylvania. I think, as I said,

he has raised an issue very much worth pursuing and one that we will, in all good faith, go forward on, to see if we can't work out some kind of solution that can get us where it is we need to be.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENTS—EXECUTIVE NOMINATIONS

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, as in executive session, I ask unanimous consent that the 40 minutes of debate with respect to the nominations begin at 2:20 p.m. today, with the votes to occur at the expiration of that time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, as in executive session, I ask unanimous consent that Executive Calendar No. 454 be added to the list of nominations to be confirmed following the votes on the FEC and judicial nominations.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2001—Continued

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, we come to the time where we have another 25 minutes before the time comes for voting. I had been expecting the Senator from Alaska. He is still tied up in a previous meeting. So we will look forward to hearing from him.

It has been an interesting experience for me to serve as chairman of this particular subcommittee on Appropriations. There are those who say this subcommittee does not matter very much because its dollar allocation is the lowest of all of the subcommittees in the Appropriations Committee, with the exception of the District of Columbia. I disagree. I think this subcommittee, in fact, can have as much impact on the Government as some of the others that have greater amounts of money to spend because of its area of jurisdiction.

I will take a little of the time here to express my gratitude for the opportunity of chairing this subcommittee and for those with whom we work. The subcommittee deals with the Architect of the Capitol. That is a term that most people in the country do not understand. They would think of the Architect of the Capitol as the person who sits down and draws the lines on paper that produces the building of the Capitol. That is what architects do.

They do not realize that the Architect of the Capitol is charged with the responsibility of maintaining the Capitol. In this situation, I have been able to go around and meet those people who oversee the activities that go on with respect to maintaining our operation. They work for the Architect of the Capitol, and they are concerned with such things as the air-conditioning, the cleaning, the repairs, the restoration of the Brumidi paintings about which the Senator from West Virginia spoke.