

arguments on the bills where we have real differences that we ought not have arguments on bills where we may not have any real differences. But I would just like to caution, or raise one point of caution. We are going to go into conference again on the Interior bill about 2:30. We were in conference on it this morning until it was interrupted for a rollcall vote on the House floor and a leadership meeting, as I understand it. If we go back in, if everything goes well and everything is kissy-face and nobody has any problems with it, we might be able to finish by 5 o'clock or so, very optimistically speaking. But at that point it is my understanding that there is an expectation that there would then be a follow-up meeting with the White House to try to discuss the known objections that the White House has to the conference as it is being formed right now.

Right now there are at least eight items which are still considered vetoable. One is the land legacy item where we have not only a \$500 million difference but substantial differences not between the parties but between the Congress as an institution and the Presidency as an institution on how that package is to be handled.

We have considerable shortfalls in the Native American health area, which the White House is insisting be restored. We have a problem with energy conservation funds. We still have a large argument on the arts. We have had three additional riders that were added in the conference last night, the White River Forest in Colorado, the White Mountain rider in New Hampshire, and now the conferees are possibly going to also include a hard rock mining amendment.

If that is the case, then we will have matters of major controversy between the Congress and the White House that still have to be resolved. Assuming that could be done today, which is a huge assumption, and my evaluation is that there is not much chance that is going to occur in that short a period, but assuming that could happen sometime today, it will take at least 7 or 8 hours after drafting those changes to get that bill in a position where the committee will then have to do its read-out where we walk through every paragraph to make certain that the bill does what the conferees agree.

That means they will have to work all night. The earliest that they could possibly file would be about 5 or 6 in the morning. The earliest the Committee on Rules could meet would be tomorrow morning. Normal order would require a 1-day layover. And, in my view, it is highly unlikely that we are going to get there that fast. I do think if we can work out the differences, the bill could be ready for a vote on Monday. But I have very strong doubts that there is a prayer it will be ready tomorrow. And while we will be here on the Committee on Appropriations and I know the leadership will be here, I would simply ask the gentleman

what is the utility of inconveniencing other Members who could go home or do whatever else they need to do rather than holding out a smidgen of a hope that this bill could be moved up one day? In my view given the large number of controversial items hanging out there, that is not likely to happen.

I assure the gentleman I am raising this simply to try to help meet the convenience of Members who have a right to have a realistic assessment of what is likely to happen on this bill.

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Mr. ARMEY. Madam Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. BONIOR. I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. ARMEY. Madam Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BONIOR) for yielding to me.

I want to personally thank the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY) for outlining before the body the enormity of the task and the enormous amount of work that there is. And, in fact, I appreciate the Subcommittee on Interior's efforts to accomplish this work.

I think the gentleman has spoken eloquently and completely about how much good work they are doing and how important it is, and we can do nothing other than to elevate the appreciation.

I know the Members of this body will show to the members of the Subcommittee on Interior their appreciation and, in fact, to even sharpen their degree of willingness to encourage them in completing this work. But the fact remains that every Member here in this body was notified in January that on this week the House would be in session and would be available to consider these very important bills until 2 o'clock on Friday; and within the constraints then of that, due and full notification to all of us was given to plan our year, and, indeed, this week within this year.

I believe the only fair way for us to show our appreciation for the appropriators is to wait upon their work, encourage them in every way, and to be available to then take our next step in the completion of the House's consideration of that bill after what the gentleman has clearly outlined will be for today and this evening and tomorrow morning a heroic effort on their part and one we certainly will want to stand and applaud them for when we have the bill on the floor.

Mr. OBEY. If the gentleman would continue to yield.

Mr. BONIOR. I yield further to the gentleman.

Mr. OBEY. Madam Speaker, I certainly would like to say it is no skin off my nose if other Members are kept here, because I am going to have to be here anyway. But I really do believe that Members need to understand that the percentage chance we have of actually having an agreed bill that is not going to be vetoed, ready for the House to vote on by tomorrow is about 3 percent.

I would note, for instance, that the National Journal indicated that last week when the House took up the NASA authorization act, it actually voted on and passed the wrong bill. It had the wrong text when we voted on it last week, and that is why we have to go through these readouts and we will be here.

We will have to go through those readouts, but I do not think it helps individual Members for them to have to be stuck in their offices when they could be doing something more useful while we are running through those readouts to make certain that that does not happen again, when, in fact, the bill could easily be ready for Monday consideration if we reach agreement on it and we would not have messed up any other Members' schedules.

Mr. ARMEY. If the gentleman would continue to yield.

Mr. BONIOR. I yield further to the gentleman.

Mr. ARMEY. Madam Speaker, I want to again affirm before the body that the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY) has very good points in support of our commitment as a body to do the Nation's work, complete the Nation's work, and get it done as soon as is possible. I have no doubt that the gentleman from Wisconsin will be instrumental in that task, because he works in the committee to see that the work is done completely and accurately; and we appreciate the gentleman from Wisconsin for his effort.

Madam Speaker, the House will stand now in anticipation of the committee completing their work. We will continue to stay in touch with the committee as their work proceeds, and should there at any time between now and tomorrow be any information that would change the circumstances, I would be happy to come to the floor and announce it to the body. But for now, I want to thank all the Members for their cooperation, their understanding, their patience and their commitment to the Nation's work and look forward to just being on the floor and voting that bill in the morning.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BROWN of Ohio addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. METCALF) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. METCALF addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. STRICKLAND addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRABACHER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. ROHRABACHER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. NORTON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

FIX 96/FIX THE TERRITORIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Guam (Mr. UNDERWOOD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. UNDERWOOD. Madam Speaker, I rise to the floor today to talk about an issue in the context of the appropriations struggles that we are having, and that is to bring a modicum of fairness and justice to the people, American citizens, of the U.S. territories.

It is ironic that there are many proposals around today which I endorse which will restore some of the benefits that have been taken away since 1996 for legal residents, not U.S. citizens of the United States, including some access to health care.

At the same time that we are doing this, health care for U.S. citizens in the territories like my home island of Guam are severely hampered by the fact that Medicaid assistance to the territories is capped at certain amounts; for Guam it is \$5.4 million. Moreover, the match between the local government and the Federal Government is fixed at 50/50.

Madam Speaker, what this means essentially is that if the government of Guam is to participate in the Medicaid program, which it currently does and for this past year it did and spent some \$14 million in Medicaid, the actual share that the government of Guam paid is not at 50/50, but is somewhere along the line of 70/30. And as a consequence, the people of Guam, the resources are taxed to a greater extent than is to be expected.

The territories, especially Guam, have not shared in the economic boom that has occurred. In the 1990s, we have not shared in the economic boom that the U.S. mainland has enjoyed; and as

a consequence, with double digit unemployment and the fact that the numbers of low-income people and people eligible for Medicaid has dramatically increased, not only due to poor economic statistics, but immigration from surrounding islands, under compacts of free association agreements with the United States. As a consequence, the people of Guam have to share a much bigger burden than the average citizen in the U.S. mainland for the provision of medical care for the indigent and the low-income.

What we proposed, and I think all of the representatives of the territories, I know all the governors of the insular areas as well, have proposed that either the caps be lifted or the cost-sharing arrangement be altered. Preferably, we could do both.

But at a minimum, we need to provide relief to these insular areas, and the way that we can do it is to secure within the context of the current appropriations process a little bit of increase in the caps, not to raise the cap entirely, but at least to raise the dollar amount on the cap, not to eliminate caps, but to at least raise the dollar amount on the caps.

We have raised this issue; I have personally raised it with the President in a meeting on Tuesday. We have raised this issue with a number of White House officials. We raised this issue with leaders here in Congress. And although it is perhaps a little bit late in the game, it is important that if we think that health care access should be extended to all people who live in the United States, regardless of their ability to pay and regardless of their legal status at a minimum, U.S. citizens in the territories should be included.

So we hope that in the context of the negotiations and the discussions over Medicaid payments, that there will be increases lifting, not eliminating, the caps, but at a minimum at least lifting the caps for Guam and American Samoa and Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and the Northern Marianas.

HOUSE RECOGNITION OF THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NATIONAL RECONNAISSANCE OFFICE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GOSS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GOSS. Madam Speaker, I come to the floor with a great sense of pride and admiration to recognize the National Reconnaissance Office, the NRO, for 40 years of outstanding service to our Nation. Since its beginning as a small covert organization on 31 of August 1960 during the administration of President Dwight D. Eisenhower, the NRO has developed an unprecedented capability to conduct signals and photographic reconnaissance from space, a capability that to this day remains unmatched by any other nation in the world.

Part of the success during the last 4 decades is due to the partnership between American industry and the NRO's highly capable workforce. This workforce, which consists of government civilians and military members of the four services, has consistently delivered new and innovative satellite systems that provide critical intelligence information to our national policymakers and to our military and civilian officials during periods of peace or in crisis or in war.

Its record of outstanding technological achievement has rightly earned the NRO the title of Freedom's Sentinel in Space.

As one of 13 Members of the intelligence community, the NRO has been very skillfully managed throughout its history by the Secretary of Defense and the director of Central Intelligence. Today the NRO provides systems that push the limits of reconnaissance capability to acquire enhanced images of the Earth and an ever-expanding variety and volume of electromagnetic signals. NRO space systems serve us daily from making it possible to verify arms control treaties to aiding in protecting American lives throughout the world, Americans at home and abroad.

For these many important achievements and the promise of continued excellence in space reconnaissance during the years ahead, we heartily congratulate the men and women of the NRO past and present on the occasion of the organization's 40th anniversary.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Hawaii (Mrs. MINK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. MINK of Hawaii addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

H.R. 4292, THE BORN-ALIVE INFANTS PROTECTION ACT OF 2000

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. CANADY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CANADY of Florida. Madam Speaker, as I thought about the subject upon which I rise to speak today, I was reminded of the words of William Butler Yeats's poem "The Second Coming," where he wrote: "Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold; mere anarchy is loosed upon the world, the blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere the ceremony of innocence is drowned."

Now, that is a pretty bleak picture, but I think it is an accurate reflection of the problem addressed by the bill I am here to discuss today.

H.R. 4292, the Born-Alive Infants Protection Act, legislation that would provide legal protection to living, fully born babies who survive abortions; tiny, helpless infants brought into the world through no choice of their own and struggling to survive.