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House of Representatives

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

(Mr. ARMEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, I see the distinguished gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT), the minority leader, is here. I am sorry to see the minority leader here rather than at dinner with his wife; but being that he is here, let me yield to the minority leader for his comment.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT).

Mr. GEPHARDT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the majority leader his timing and a time line on the consideration of the tax bill tonight. The reason I ask is that, as the majority leader knows, a lot of our Members are wanting a time line that they can depend on.

A lot of Members have events at home with families and they have plane reservations and they would like to be able to rely on those reservations if it is going to be tomorrow morning. They wanted a time line on when the majority thinks this bill will actually find its way to the floor.

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Missouri for his request. The gentleman is absolutely right. We try our very best to keep Members apprised of the fact. This is, of course, a very large bill. It has many complex dimensions, and they are being discussed.

I am happy to report that the discussions are going well, and we have every reason to believe that we will come to closure on these discussions fairly soon.

As that happens, of course, we would have to do the process of actually writing the bill and preparing it for filing. Sometime this evening, perhaps even in the late evening, 11 o'clock or even later, the committee will come to the floor and file the conference report.

We will be advised at that filing; and at that point, we have one hour's time before the Committee on Rules will meet. We believe the Committee on Rules will be able to meet and take care of its business fairly quickly, and that would then enable them to come to the floor with the rules under which the business would be considered.

The House would then convene to consider the first rule providing for same day consideration and the second rule providing for consideration of the conference report, both of which are debatable for an hour.

Following consideration of both rules, the House will consider the conference report, and final passage would occur late this evening or early in the morning.

Let me just say we will again remind through e-mail and Whip notices Members at the time that the committee has prepared the bill for filing. That, then, is a 1-hour notice. It would be then available for people to examine before the Committee on Rules meets. I would say, Mr. Speaker, that we should expect that sometime in the neighborhood between 11:00 and 12:00.

Given these circumstances to which I attach a very high probability in my expectations, it is our judgment that Members would, rather than complete that work in before, say, 3:00 or 4:00 in the morning and be able, then, to catch that quick catnap and make their planes back for their district work periods. So it is our judgment it would be better for us to proceed through the night and complete the work so that their time could be free as early as possible when the flights begin on Saturday morning.

Mr. GEPHARDT. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield again?

Mr. ARMEY. I yield to the gentleman from Missouri.

Mr. GEPHARDT. Mr. Speaker, I would agree that I think Members, more than anything, want certainty at this point so they can make their plans. Obviously also Members will want to be able to see this bill prior to voting on it. I would hope that there would be time even to have a caucus or a conference in each party so that at least there could be an oral presentation to Members about what is included in the bill before they vote on it, for the Members that want to do that.

As the majority leader knows, a few weeks ago, we had a problem with the budget not having the pages in it, and we do not want to have that happen again. So I hope that we can see the writing in these caucuses and conference meetings before they actually vote.

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, I think the gentleman's point is well taken. Let me say again, as soon as we find the participants agreeing across the table, they will obviously begin the process of vetting as the paperwork is going on.

I would expect Members might again be attentive to their phones. Stay close to a phone, stay in touch with your office. My expectation might be that, in the case of both parties in the body, their respective caucuses may be notifying Members of an opportunity to come together and look at it and get that briefing.

Mr. GEPHARDT. Mr. Speaker, if I could just ask the majority leader one additional question. A lot of our Members from the West Coast have been very desirous of legislation coming here before we leave on energy. Can I inquire whether or not there is any plan to bring any energy legislation before we leave?

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, let me thank the gentleman from Missouri for his inquiry. No, we would expect to have no action on anything other than the two rules I mentioned and the tax bill.

Mr. GEPHARDT. Mr. Speaker, finally, I assume that Members will look

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forward to receiving an hour's notice before we go to the Committee on Rules, and that would be a time when the conference and the caucus could meet and review the legislation.

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, of course that would be subject to the conference chairmen on the respective sides making those announcements and that request, and we would communicate as much as we can to all Members.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I extend to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT), my good friend and colleague, an opportunity to, I hope, get away, have dinner with his wife, and enjoy some part of this evening before we go back to work.

REPORT ON PROGRESS TOWARD ACHIEVING BENCHMARKS IN BOSNIA—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 107–78)

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD) laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, without objection, referred to the Committee on International Relations, the Committee on Appropriations, and the Committee on Armed Services, and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by the Levin Amendment to the 1998 Supplemental Appropriations and Rescissions Act (section 7(b) of Public Law 105–174) and section 1203(a) of the Strom Thurmond National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1999 (Public Law 105–261), I transmit herewith a report on progress made toward achieving benchmarks for a sustainable peace process in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In July 2000, the fourth semiannual report was sent to the Congress detailing progress towards achieving the ten benchmarks that were adopted by the Peace Implementation Council and the North Atlantic Council in order to evaluate implementation of the Dayton Accords. This fifth report, which also includes supplemental reporting as required by section 1203(a) of Public Law 105–261, provides an updated assessment of progress on the benchmarks covering the period July 1, 2000, to February 28, 2001.

GEORGE W. BUSH.
THE WHITE HOUSE, *May 25, 2001.*

COMMUNICATION FROM CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the chairman of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure; which was read and, without objection, referred to the Committee on Appropriations:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE,
Washington, DC, May 23, 2001.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker, House of Representatives, Capitol, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Enclosed please find copies of resolutions approved by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure on May 16, 2001, in accordance with 40 U.S.C. § 606 and 40 U.S.C. § 610.

Sincerely,

DON YOUNG,
Chairman.

There was no objection.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 5 o'clock and 39 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

□ 0517

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD) at 5 o'clock and 17 minutes a.m.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 1836, ECONOMIC GROWTH AND TAX RELIEF RECONCILIATION ACT OF 2001

Mr. THOMAS submitted the following conference report and statement on the bill (H.R. 1836) to provide for reconciliation pursuant to section 104 of the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2002:

CONFERENCE REPORT (H. REPT. 107–84)

The committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of he two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 1836), to provide for reconciliation pursuant to section 104 of the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2002, having met, after full and free conference, have agreed to recommend and do recommend to their respective Houses as follows:

That the House recede from its disagreement to the amendment of the Senate and agree to the same with an amendment as follows:

In lieu of the matter proposed to be inserted by the State amendment, insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; REFERENCES; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the ''Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2001''.

(b) AMENDMENT OF 1986 CODE.—Except as otherwise expressly provided, whenever in this Act an amendment or repeal is expressed in terms of an amendment to, or repeal of, a section or other provision, the reference shall be considered to be made to a section or other provision of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

(c) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents of this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; references; table of contents.

TITLE I—INDIVIDUAL INCOME TAX RATE REDUCTIONS

Sec. 101. Reduction in income tax rates for individuals.

Sec. 102. Repeal of phaseout of personal exemptions.

Sec. 103. Phaseout of overall limitation on itemized deductions.

TITLE II—TAX BENEFITS RELATING TO CHILDREN

Sec. 201. Modifications to child tax credit.

Sec. 202. Expansion of adoption credit and adoption assistance programs.

Sec. 203. Refunds disregarded in the administration of Federal programs and federally assisted programs.

Sec. 204. Dependent care credit.

Sec. 205. Allowance of credit for employer expenses for child care assistance.

TITLE III—MARRIAGE PENALTY RELIEF

Sec. 301. Elimination of marriage penalty in standard deduction.

Sec. 302. Phaseout of marriage penalty in 15-percent bracket.

Sec. 303. Marriage penalty relief for earned income credit; earned income to include only amounts includible in gross income; simplification of earned income credit.

TITLE IV—AFFORDABLE EDUCATION PROVISIONS

Subtitle A—Education Savings Incentives

Sec. 401. Modifications to education individual retirement accounts.

Sec. 402. Modifications to qualified tuition programs.

Subtitle B—Educational Assistance

Sec. 411. Extension of exclusion for employer-provided educational assistance.

Sec. 412. Elimination of 60-month limit and increase in income limitation on student loan interest deduction.

Sec. 413. Exclusion of certain amounts received under the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program and the F. Edward Hebert Armed Forces Health Professions Scholarship and Financial Assistance Program.

Subtitle C—Liberalization of Tax-Exempt Financing Rules for Public School Construction

Sec. 421. Additional increase in arbitrage rebate exception for governmental bonds used to finance educational facilities.

Sec. 422. Treatment of qualified public educational facility bonds as exempt facility bonds.

Subtitle D—Other Provisions

Sec. 431. Deduction for higher education expenses.

TITLE V—ESTATE, GIFT, AND GENERATION-SKIPPING TRANSFER TAX PROVISIONS

Subtitle A—Repeal of Estate and Generation-Skipping Transfer Taxes

Sec. 501. Repeal of estate and generation-skipping transfer taxes.

Subtitle B—Reductions of Estate and Gift Tax Rates

Sec. 511. Additional reductions of estate and gift tax rates.

Subtitle C—Increase in Exemption Amounts

Sec. 521. Increase in exemption equivalent of unified credit, lifetime gifts exemption, and GST exemption amounts.

Subtitle D—Credit for State Death Taxes

Sec. 531. Reduction of credit for State death taxes.