



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 107th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 147

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, JUNE 12, 2001

No. 81

House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CULBERSON).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
June 12, 2001.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JOHN ABNEY CULBERSON to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2001, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 30 minutes, and each Member except the majority leader, the minority leader or the minority whip limited to not to exceed 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

LIVABLE COMMUNITIES ON CAPITOL HILL

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I came to Congress to promote more livable communities, the Federal Government being a better partner to make our families safe, healthy and economically secure. An important part of making those communities livable is making sure that people have the choices about where they want to live, work, and how they travel.

A recent study highlighted Washington, D.C. as the third most con-

gested city in America for traffic congestion. Rush hour now is up to 6 hours or more out of the day.

To bring it down closer to home in our little community on Capitol Hill, we have problems with congestion, pollution and parking shortages. There are over 6,000 parking spaces reserved for House employees alone, which cost the taxpayer more than \$1,500 a year per employee. With the temporary closing of the Cannon Building parking garage, now more than ever parking is at a premium on Capitol Hill.

Three years ago, with the help of the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA), the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) and Speaker Gingrich, we were able to change the policy so that we did not just give unlimited free parking to House employees and no alternative, but finally help give them a choice by providing a modest \$21 Metro transit benefit for those offices that wish to provide it for their employees.

Still, the House lags far behind employers in the private sector and other Federal agencies in providing and promoting for transit benefits. As a result of work that we were able to do with the last administration, all Federal employees except our own here in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area get at least \$65 a month to promote transit. Soon, the amount of the transit benefit allowed by law will be increased to \$100 a month. But the House should not always be playing catch-up. Even our Senate colleagues across the way provide \$44 a month for their employees.

Recently, we have submitted over three dozen of our colleagues' signatures to the Committee on House Administration asking them to allow those offices that want to provide this transit benefit the full \$65 allowed under law.

What better way for the House to be a part of the solution of saving energy,

protecting the air, fighting against congestion than by expanding the transit benefit the way that we are asking the rest of America to do it.

It is also appropriate, I think, on this very muggy day to consider the role of our employees that actually walk or bike or run to work. There are only two facilities on all of Capitol Hill for over 6,000 employees to be able to shower at work when we close the facilities in the O'Neill Building.

Now, several years ago, we were able to work with the Subcommittee on Legislative Branch and the House Superintendent to be able to add some showers and lockers to the Rayburn Building. Now it is time for the committee to consider again adding more facilities, at least to avoid reducing the amount for our employees that are trying to do the right thing.

Not only does it help protect the environment, but we know that daily physical activity for adults is now at an all-time low. Forty percent of the adult population does not engage in leisure time physical activity. We know that moderate amounts of exercise can significantly promote the health and wellness as well as enhancing the productivity of our employees.

I would strongly suggest that my colleagues join me in urging the Committee on House Administration for us to at least not be left behind in promoting transit use of our employees and be able to provide adequate shower and locker facilities for our employees that are trying to do the right thing and promote physical activity and protect the environment.

It is important that we work on developing livable communities, not just in our districts, but for the men and women who work here on Capitol Hill. The environment and our employees deserve our best efforts.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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