Congress changed this procedure by its rule XXIV, clause six which provided for the consideration of the Private Calendar in lieu of special orders. This rule was amended in 1932, and then adopted in its present form on March 22, 1935.

A determined effort to reduce the private bill workload of the Congress was made in the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946. Section 131 of that Act banned the introduction or the consideration of four types of private bills: first, those authorizing the payment of money for pensions; second, for personal or property damages for which suit may be brought under the Federal tort claims procedure; third, those authorizing the construction of a bridge across a navigable stream, or fourth, those authorizing the correction of a military or naval record.

This ban afforded some temporary relief but was soon offset by the rising postwar and cold war flood for private immigration bills. The 82nd Congress passed 1,023 Private Laws, as compared with 594 Public Laws. The 88th Congress passed 360 Private Laws compared with 666 Public Laws.

Under rule XXIV, clause six, the Private Calendar is called the first and third Tuesday of each month. The consideration of the Private Calendar bills on the first

On the first Tuesday of each month, after disposition of business on the Speaker's table for reference only, the Speaker directs the call of the Private Calendar. If a bill called is objected to by two or more Members, it is automatically recommitted to the Committee reporting it. No reservation of objection is entertained. Bills unobjected to are considered in the House in the Committee of the Whole.

On the third Tuesday of each month, the same procedure is followed with the exception that omnibus bills embodying bills previously rejected have preference and are in order regardless of objection.

Such omnibus bills are read by paragraph, and no amendments are entertained except to strike out or reduce amounts or provide limitations. Matters so stricken out shall not be again included in an omnibus bill during that session. Debate is limited to motions allowable under the rule and does not admit motions to strike out the last word or reservation of objections. The rules prohibit the Speaker from recognizing Members for statements or for requests for unanimous consent for debate. Omnibus bills so passed are thereupon resolved in their component bills, which are engrossed separately and disposed of as if passed separately.

Private Calendar bills unfinished on one Tuesday go over to the next Tuesday on which such bills are in order and are considered before the call of bills subsequently on the calendar. Omnibus bills follow the same procedure and go over to the next Tuesday on which that class of business is again in order. When the previous question is ordered on a Private Calendar bill, the bill comes up for disposition on the next legislative day.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to describe to the newer Members the Official Objectors system the House has established to deal with the great volume of Private Bills.

The Majority Leader and the Minority Leader each appoint three Members to serve as Private Calendar Objectors during a Congress. The Objectors are on the Floor ready to object to any Private Bill which they feel is objectionable for any reason. Seated near them to provide technical assistance are the majority and minority legislative clerks.

Should any Member have a doubt or question about a particular Private Bill, he or she can get assistance from objectors, their clerks, or from the Member who introduced the bill.

The great volume of private bills and the desire to have an opportunity to study them carefully before they are called on the Private Calendar has caused the six objectors to agree upon certain ground rules. The rules limit consideration of bills placed on the Private Calendar only shortly before the calendar is called. With this agreement adopted on July 24, 2001, the Members of the Private Calendar Objectors Committee have agreed that during the 107th Congress, they will consider only those bills which have been on the Private Calendar for a period of seven (7) days, excluding the day the bill is reported and the day the calendar is called. Reports must be available to the Objectors for three (3) calendar days.

It is agreed that the majority and minority clerks will not submit to the Objectors any bills which do not meet this requirement.

This policy will be strictly enforced except during the closing days of a session when the House rules are suspended.

This agreement was entered into by: the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. COBLE), the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BARR), the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT), the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. BOUCHER), and the gentlelady from Connecticut (Mrs. DELAURO).

I feel confident that I speak from my colleagues when I request all Members to enable us to give the necessary advance considerations to private bills by not asking that we depart from the above agreement unless absolutely necessary.

DEPARTMENTS OF COMMERCE, JUSTICE, AND STATE, THE JUDICIARY, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2002

SPEECH OF

HON. NITA M. LOWEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 17, 2001

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2500) making appropriations for the Departments of Commerce, Justice and State, and Judiciary, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2002, and for other purposes:

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of the DeGette amendment, and I thank my colleague for her strong leadership on this issue.

A woman's right to make a private decision to terminate a pregnancy is the law of the land. The prohibition on prisoners' access to abortion services in federal prison facilities contained in this bill does not make it impossible for women in prison to obtain an abortion—but it deliberately makes it more expensive, more difficult and less private.

In my view, the only reason the ban does not go further—ban abortion outright—is because Americans support a woman's right to choose. I know that many of my colleagues do not, and I respect their views on this issue. I know that these colleagues would vote to overturn the Roe v. Wade decision immediately, if they thought they could get away with it.

But they don't go that far, because Americans wouldn't let them get away with it.

Instead, those who oppose a women's right to choose take every opportunity to make the decision ever more difficult, dangerous, and expensive.

I support the DeGette amendment because I believe that's the wrong approach. If we agree that there should be less abortion, we can and should work together to make the decision to terminate a pregnancy less necessary. The policy we are debating in this amendment—which allows women in federal prison to pay for an abortion outside but not obtain one inside the prison system—only makes the decision to terminate harder.

What could we do to make the need for terminating a pregnancy less necessary? We could do more to promote contraceptive access and use. We could work harder to educate people about taking responsibility for protecting themselves from unintended pregnancy. We could do more to prevent sexual assault, rape and incest. We could work together—as our constituents clearly would like us to do—to ensure that most women never need to make the personal decision about terminating their pregnancy.

Less necessary—not more harassing and less private.

I ask my colleagues to join me in supporting the DeGette motion to strike.