

The language in this area of the bill provides the Special Master with some discretion, and I hope the Special Master will use this discretion to ensure that the victim compensation is administered fairly. But I regret that the haste in which this legislation was put together made refining the victims compensation provisions impossible.

There is a second important question that Congress didn't address: Should the compensation system in this bill be the model for future victims of terrorist acts or natural disasters? Past victims of terrorist attacks have not received the generous compensation amounts H.R. 2926 envisions. Apart from the obvious fairness question of how best to give victims and their families similar compensation, there are cost considerations that Congress did not evaluate if the model in H.R. 2926 is to be used in future cases.

In short, compensation to the victims of the September 11 tragedies is appropriate and important. H.R. 2926, however, fails to thoughtfully address:

How to allocate compensation among victims killed or injured on September 11;

Whether past victims of terrorist attacks should be similarly compensated;

Whether the compensation system will be a model for future victims;

The estimated aggregate cost of this compensation system;

How federal compensation will be coordinated with other compensation that the victims and their families will receive from charitable funds and other sources.

UNKNOWN AND POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT COST
RAMIFICATIONS

In addition to the problems described above, the legislation also has another provision that could end up costing the federal taxpayer billions of dollars. The bill allows the Secretary of Transportation to determine that an air carrier is not liable for claims regarding losses suffered by third parties above \$100 million in the aggregate arising from any terrorist acts that occur in the 180-day period following the enactment of the bill. Where the Secretary makes this certification, the government is responsible for liability above that amount. In the event of another airline-related tragedy or tragedies resulting from terrorist acts, this provision potentially could result in the expenditure of many billions of additional government funds.

LACK OF INDEPENDENT REVIEW

The many substantive problems with the airline relief bill are the result of a defective process. Although the bill commits federal taxpayers to providing tens of billions of dollars in relief, there was no meaningful opportunity for review of the merits of the legislation by independent experts without a stake in the outcome.

In particular, Congress erred by not adequately involving the General Accounting Office in review of this legislation. Nonpartisan and independent, GAO specializes in evaluating expenditures of federal programs. Yet Congress made no request for a formal GAO analysis before enacting the bill.

CONCLUSION

H.R. 2926 reflects a commendable and understandable response to a heart-breaking national tragedy. Unfortunately, the process used to draft the legislation prevented the careful review that is needed to ensure the bill is an effective and fair response to terrorist acts.

By omitting any provision dealing with airline security or compensation for displaced workers, this legislation unwisely focuses just on responding to the immediate needs of the major airlines. That need is unquestionably urgent, but addressing it without resolving other urgent problems is a mistake.

H.R. 2926 received so little scrutiny that it's impossible to assess how much the bill will cost federal taxpayers. At a minimum, this legislation will obligate the federal government to provide \$15 billion in financial assistance, but the actual costs could be far higher. And if this bill becomes a model for other affected industries or future victims of terrorist attacks, the total costs could multiply rapidly.

In the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, our nation has learned to put a premium on the value of shared sacrifice.

Shared sacrifice was embodied by the firefighters who charged into the World Trade Center to rescue people they never met and who died in the effort. Shared sacrifice, we're told, is over 100,000 workers losing their jobs in the airline industry, and many being denied promised severance benefits. And shared sacrifice will be exemplified in the commitment of the men and women in our armed services who are being sent into battle.

But under H.R. 2926, we have found there are limits to shared sacrifice. This bill asks for no sacrifices from those who earn millions in the airline industry. To the contrary, it allows airline executives to continue to earn millions of dollars in salary and compensation, while at the same time imposing no new security responsibilities on the airlines and providing no relief to laid-off workers.

That is inexcusable.

Congress and the Bush Administration are going to have to respond to unexpected demands and urgent needs in the coming months. It is essential that our legislative responses be thoughtful, carefully responsive to actual problems, and effective.

Given the haste in which it was considered, H.R. 2926 likely fails these tests. We can do better in future challenges, and we owe it to our nation to do better.

IN HONOR OF STANLEY MATHER

HON. DOUG OSE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 2, 2001

Mr. OSE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of a constituent and friend of mine, Mr. Stanley Mather and to commemorate his life and the service he gave to his community. Stan served our community as a plant pathologist for thirty-one years with the California State Department of Food and Agriculture, where he tirelessly fought to keep California's fruit crops free of viruses. On Sunday, July 22, 2001, Stanley Mather suffered a heart attack and died in his home in Sacramento, California.

Stan first publicly served our nation as a gunnery officer aboard the battleship, USS *Nevada*, during World War II, where he saw close combat in Europe during the invasion of France in 1944 and the battles for Okinawa and Iwo Jima the following year. During the following three decades, Stan served in a variety of positions, always focusing on fruit virus control programs.

Most notably, it was his work as a member of the Sacramento Rotary Club that first led me in contact with him. Over the last few years, Stan and I have worked closely on many occasions and I consider it a true honor to have had him as a friend. While he is sorely missed, I am reassured knowing that his legacy will live on for generations to come.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO THE
MONTROSE COUNTY SHERIFF'S
POSSE

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 2, 2001

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the selfless dedication of the Montrose County Sheriff's Posse. This organization in Montrose County consists of over forty members that volunteer their time and services to their community.

The Posse helps the residents of Montrose County in times of need by providing assistance with search and rescue efforts and forest fire control as well as many other relief activities. In the year 2000, they provided over 2,300 hours of not only their time and effort but also their own equipment. They have managed to remain an effective organization because of the dedication of their volunteer members. The Montrose County Sheriff's Posse provides important public service to a community that makes an effort to financially fund the volunteer organization.

Mr. Speaker, the Montrose County Sheriff's Posse provides an essential service to their community. Their commitment to such an important cause is admirable. I would like to thank the Posse for their valuable assistance and wish them continued success and community support in their future efforts.

NATURE MAY PROVIDE COMFORT
FOR VICTIMS OF TERRORIST AT-
TACKS

HON. NICK J. RAHALL II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 2, 2001

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, over the last weeks Members of Congress have stepped outside of party boundaries, joining together and unanimously supporting millions of dollars to aid victims, families, and rescue workers affected by the September 11th attacks. Now, in addition to financial assistance, it is important for us to provide outlets for these victims and their families through the grieving and recovery process.

The legislation I introduce today continues the bipartisan spirit of the Congress, as it is cosponsored by Resources Committee Chairman JAMES HANSEN. The bill would direct the Secretary of the Interior to create a program under which the survivors and families of the victims of the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, as well as the emergency personnel who responded to that crisis, may visit our national parks, forests, and public lands free of charge.

Ralph Waldo Emerson said Nature is the symbol of the spirit and that Nature turns all