

Storms like Charley, Frances, Ivan, and Jeanne can destroy the property of our State's valiant people. They can even test Florida's enormous reserve of physical and emotional energy, but they will not break our will or steal our heart.

As we consider legislation to assist hurricane victims, may we act in the same spirit and with the same courage and determination.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 784, which commends the resiliency of the people of the State of Florida and the work of those individuals who have assisted with the recovery efforts after the devastation caused by Hurricanes Charley, Frances, and Ivan. As a Floridian and cosponsor of this resolution, I am proud to stand here today.

Florida is the most hurricane-prone State in the Nation. This season alone we have witnessed destruction from Hurricanes Charley, Frances, Ivan and, most recently, Jeanne. Homes have been damaged and in some cases destroyed. Power outages continue to plague many throughout the State. The agricultural industry has taken a beating by the devastation caused to crops and livestock.

And the hurricane season is far from over.

Mr. Speaker, Floridians are tired and many are hurting as a result of these hurricanes. But they don't give up. They rally together to help those in need, volunteering their time and resources to help their neighbors. Even individuals who are faced with repairing their own homes and businesses take time to help those with greater need first. This is a testament to the good will and hopeful spirit that I have come to admire and expect in the people of our great State.

I commend Floridians for persevering during this trying hurricane season, and I applaud all those who have assisted in recovery efforts. Governor Jeb Bush has done a great job leading, encouraging, and comforting the weary citizens of our State, and he is one player among a cast of thousands that is worthy of our praise. Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) representatives who have spent much time and many resources assisting Floridians. I also commend our local and State law enforcement officials, emergency workers, and public safety personnel for keeping order, directing traffic and rescuing stranded individuals.

There are too many people to thank to name them, but they know who they are. I encourage all Floridians to keep persevering and to keep helping one another. You are an inspiration to us all.

Mr. Speaker, passage of H. Res. 784 would show the people of Florida that the House of Representatives recognizes and values the manner by which they have dealt with this busy hurricane season. I urge all of my colleagues to support this resolution to commend Floridians for their hard work and patience during this difficult time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 784, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof)

the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

The title of the resolution was amended so as to read: "Commending the resiliency of the people of the State of Florida and the work of those individuals who have assisted with the recovery efforts after the devastation caused by Hurricanes Charley, Frances, Ivan, and Jeanne."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.J. RES. 106, PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES RELATING TO MARRIAGE

Mr. LINDER, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 108-705) on the resolution (H. Res. 801) providing for consideration of the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 106) proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States relating to marriage, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.J. RES. 107, MAKING CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2005

Mr. LINDER, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 108-706) on the resolution (H. Res. 802) providing for consideration of the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 107) making continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2005, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3193, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PERSONAL PROTECTION ACT

Mr. LINDER, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 108-707) on the resolution (H. Res. 803) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3193) to restore second amendment rights in the District of Columbia, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA RETIREMENT PROTECTION IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2004

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4657) to amend the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 to improve the administration of Federal pension benefit payments for District of Columbia teachers, police officers, and fire fighters, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 4657

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "District of Columbia Retirement Protection Improvement Act of 2004".

SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FEDERAL PENSION FUND FOR PAYMENT OF FEDERAL BENEFIT PAYMENTS TO DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA TEACHERS, POLICE OFFICERS, AND FIRE FIGHTERS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subtitle A of title XI of the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 (sec. 1—801.01 et seq., D.C. Official Code) is amended—

(1) by redesignating chapter 9 as chapter 10;

(2) by redesignating sections 11081 through 11087 as sections 11091 through 11097; and

(3) by inserting after chapter 8 the following new chapter:

"CHAPTER 9—DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FEDERAL PENSION FUND

"SEC. 11081. CREATION OF FUND.

"(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established on the books of the Treasury the District of Columbia Teachers, Police Officers, and Firefighters Federal Pension Fund (hereafter referred to as the 'D.C. Federal Pension Fund'), consisting of the following:

"(1) The assets transferred pursuant to section 11083.

"(2) The annual Federal payments deposited pursuant to section 11084.

"(3) Any amounts otherwise appropriated to such Fund.

"(4) Any income earned on the investment of the assets of such Fund pursuant to subsection (b).

"(b) INVESTMENT OF ASSETS.—The Secretary shall invest such portion of the assets of the D.C. Federal Pension Fund as is not in the judgment of the Secretary required to meet current withdrawals. Such investments shall be in public debt securities with maturities suitable to the needs of the D.C. Federal Pension Fund, as determined by the Secretary, and bearing interest at rates determined by the Secretary, taking into consideration current market yields on outstanding marketable obligations of the United States of comparable maturities.

"(c) RECORDKEEPING FOR ACTUARIAL STATUS.—The Secretary shall provide for the keeping of such records as are necessary for determining the actuarial status of the D.C. Federal Pension Fund.

"SEC. 11082. USES OF AMOUNTS IN FUND.

"(a) IN GENERAL.—Amounts in the D.C. Federal Pension Fund shall be used—

"(1) to make Federal benefit payments under this subtitle;

"(2) subject to subsection (b), to cover the reasonable and necessary administrative expenses incurred by any person in administering the D.C. Federal Pension Fund and carrying out this chapter;

"(3) for the accumulation of funds in order to finance obligations of the Federal Government for future benefits; and

"(4) for such other purposes as are specified in this subtitle.

"(b) BUDGETING, CERTIFICATION, AND APPROVAL OF ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES.—The administrative expenses of the D.C. Federal Pension Fund shall be paid in accordance with an annual budget set forth by the Pension Fund Trustee which shall be subject to certification and approval by the Secretary.

"SEC. 11083. TRANSFER OF ASSETS AND OBLIGATIONS OF TRUST FUND AND FEDERAL SUPPLEMENTAL FUND.

"(a) TRANSFER OF OBLIGATIONS.—Effective October 1, 2004, all obligations to make Federal benefit payments shall be transferred from the Trust Fund to the D.C. Federal Pension Fund.

"(b) TRANSFER OF ASSETS.—Effective October 1, 2004, all assets of the Trust Fund and