

about education and the increase in education rights. He spoke well and rightly.

I do want to emphasize for the record, though, that included among all the many beneficial provisions of this bill is an important limitation on earmarking of funds within the ARC. In the past, and it has usually happened in conference, but also occasionally in the House appropriations bill, funds have been earmarked for one or another project which has undercut the effectiveness of the Federal-State partnership and the authenticity of the grass-roots up process of project designation, development and implementation. Using the appropriations process to direct funds has disadvantaged the other regions, of the other States within the region, and has devalued the funding that Congress has appropriated. More importantly, it devalues the Federal, State, and local partnership, the very effective grass-roots up process of project selection within Appalachia. It says your judgment doesn't count. We know better. The authenticity and effectiveness of the ARC program derives exactly from its grass-roots initiative.

So I was very insistent in the last Congress on finding a means by which we could thwart the earmarking. We have it in this bill. Our Senate counterparts have concurred that they want to follow this procedure. It will inure to the benefit of the Appalachian Regional Commission.

Mr. RAHALL. Madam Speaker, I am today in support of H.R. 799, the Appalachian Regional Development Act Amendments of 2007. This long overdue legislation continues to promote every one of the southern West Virginia counties I represent, and indeed the entire State of West Virginia, as it is the only State which lies entirely within ARC jurisdiction.

"A rising tide," President Kennedy told us, "lifts all boats." And so one of President Kennedy's legacies was created in 1965 with a unique mission to serve a unique part of the Nation, the Appalachian region.

Historically, the counties of Appalachia have "faced high levels of poverty and economic distress resulting from geographic isolation and inadequate infrastructure."

It was with these concerns in mind that ARC was created and it is these concerns ARC has been addressing vigorously for the past 40 years.

Take for example the area of transportation, a major focus for ARC. ARC was developed, in part, because of the severe isolation experienced in Appalachia and that in order to develop Appalachia and give its people an opportunity to compete, a system of highways was needed. Enter the Appalachian Development Highway System, which was created to serve the transportation needs of Appalachian residents by assisting in the construction of highways so critically needed by Appalachian communities for economic growth and development.

The ADHS now encompasses over 3,000 miles of Appalachian highways and nearly 85 percent of those roads are complete or under construction. The ADHS is truly a success story for ARC and all of Appalachia. Despite

the President's recent budget, which requests eliminating funding for the Appalachian Development Highway System, it is my strong conviction that this program be continued at the agreed upon level set forth in SAFETEA-LU.

Before I leave this subject of transportation and the critical value of rural America's transportation network to our urban brothers and sisters, it is my sincere hope that rural America's voice will be loud and clear when it comes to funding schemes that would punish rural commuters and citizens who are forced by geography to drive long distances each day to and from their employment. It is an issue critical to the completion and maintenance of ARC development highways network.

And while a major focus of ARC remains on highways and Appalachian transportation infrastructure, as the times have changed so has ARC.

As much of the United States has been able to take advantage of the technological boom of the late 20th and early 21st centuries, Appalachia once again is in danger of being left behind and unable to compete in the global marketplace.

In the most recent FCC data on high-speed connections for Internet access, released on January 31, 2007, you can track the Appalachian mountain range by just how spotty the provider coverage is on the FCC's provider map. In fact, in West Virginia it is significantly below the average in broadband use nationwide.

Again, ARC is there to offer significant support, bringing broadband access to our communities, which is essential to leveling the playing field and giving our communities an opportunity to compete. Schools, businesses, local governments and individual homes all have benefited from ARC involvement in the expansion of broadband access in Appalachia, and continue to do so.

I have been working with ARC, private telecommunications companies and local economic development leaders to bring broadband technology into southern West Virginia. For example, through the E-commerce training initiatives being offered by ARC and others we are working to connect local small businesses to broadband, opening doors to Internet sales and services that just weren't there a couple of years ago.

It is ARC's ability to serve its mission by adapting its actions to fit the times that makes ARC such an invaluable resource to Appalachia and the Nation. From the Appalachian Development Highway System to the E-commerce and broadband initiatives, ARC continues to serve its mission by advocating for and partnering with the people of Appalachia to create opportunities for self-sustaining economic development and improved quality of life.

I am also glad to see the integrity of ARC programs kept in tact by disallowing the use of earmarks in this legislation. I believe adoption of this provision is critical and will benefit all ARC member-states and the long-term viability of ARC itself. Additionally, I am pleased to see the bi-partisan support for this program which was displayed by the rejection of attempts to cut funding for it in the recent House passed FY08 Energy and Water Appropriations legislation.

I applaud the efforts of Federal Co-Chair Anne Pope who, as a native daughter of Appalachia, executes so well the mission of ARC

in each of Appalachia's communities. I have said this before and am happy to do so again on the record, Anne is one of the finest Federal Co-Chairs to ever serve the people of Appalachia and I look forward to our continued strong relationship serving the needs of southern West Virginians, together.

I strongly support ARC, its mission and the incredibly successful initiatives it has undertaken to better the lives of the people of Appalachia and West Virginia.

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I have no other speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 799, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the yeas have it.

Mr. PEARCE. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 4 o'clock and 50 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m.

□ 1830

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. HILL) at 6 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3043, DEPARTMENTS OF LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, AND EDUCATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2008

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 110-235) on the resolution (H. Res. 547) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3043) making appropriations for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.