

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

JOINT RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL OF REGULATIONS RELATING TO INTERAGENCY COOPERATION UNDER THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

HON. NICK J. RAHALL II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 15, 2009

Mr. RAHALL. Madam Speaker, today I am introducing legislation, using the authority granted to Congress under the Congressional Review Act, to overturn last minute regulations promulgated by the Bush Interior and Commerce Departments which give federal agencies an unacceptable degree of discretion to decide whether or not to comply with the Endangered Species Act, ESA.

Joining me in introducing this measure are Mr. MARKEY, Mr. GEORGE MILLER, Mr. DEFazio, Mr. HINCHey, Mrs. CAPPs, Mr. INSLEE, Mr. HOLT, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. DINGELL, Mr. DICKS, Mr. FARR, and Mr. BLUMENAUER. I thank them for their support.

The Bush Administration has had a long, though one could hardly say proud, history of trying to undermine the Endangered Species Act and the protection it provides our Nation's most imperiled species. For years, high ranking political appointees in the Department of Interior used their positions and influence to meddle in scientific decisions under the ESA and alter outcomes, potentially harming species and most definitely harming the integrity of the law and morale and reputation of the agency charged with implementing it.

The rules we seek to overturn with this joint resolution were rushed through in the final months of the Administration and are the final assault on and insult to one of our nation's landmark conservation laws. They gut what is the cornerstone of the law, the Section 7 consultation process, and allow federal agencies to undertake or permit thousands of federal activities, such as logging or building a dam, on federal land and other areas without obtaining review or comment from federal wildlife biologists at the Fish and Wildlife Service.

This incredibly controversial proposal—which could have far-reaching implications on the future integrity of the Endangered Species program—clearly merits more public scrutiny than the Administration provided. First proposed in late August, the Administration rushed a public comment period and environmental assessment and then reviewed more than 300,000 public comments at a rate of more than 6,000 per hour. This last minute, ill-conceived overhaul of the rules governing America's endangered wildlife, brokered behind closed doors, is an affront to the American people who trust their government to do the right thing.

Eleventh hour rulemakings rarely, if ever, lead to good government, and this is not the type of legacy the Bush Administration should be leaving for future generations. Not surpris-

ingly, this is not the first time—though fortunately it will likely be the last—that the Bush Interior Department abdicated their responsibility for ensuring that an agency action will not jeopardize a listed species or harm their habitat. Similar regulations proposed to allow the Environmental Protection Agency to decide whether to consult when licensing pesticides were rejected by the Court in 2006, just as we should reject these regulatory changes now.

As the Bush Administration fades off into the sunset, they leave behind a trail of last minute regulatory changes that represent the worst in public policy and that Congress and the new President will have to undo. In my role as chairman of the Natural Resources Committee, I look forward to working with the Obama Administration to correct course and promote a positive resource conservation agenda. We need to invoke the change that is needed to restore the vigor and vitality of America, including the unique natural heritage that has carved our Nation as we know it today. Passage of this joint resolution will be one important step in restoring that natural heritage.

CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2009

SPEECH OF

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 14, 2009

Ms. McCOLLUM. Madam Speaker, I rise today to express my strong support for the Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2009 which will provide health care coverage for an additional 4.1 million children. Every child in America should have the right to health care, and this bill will bring us one step closer to that goal.

It is unacceptable that more than 47 million Americans, including 11 percent of American children, are without health insurance. Many hard-working families in Minnesota and across the nation have lost their jobs, 2.6 million jobs in the last year. For every 1 percent increase in the unemployment rate, it is estimated that as many as 1.5 million Americans will lose their health care coverage. Expanding SCHIP will expand health care access for children at a time when too many American families are losing employer-sponsored health care. In these tough economic times, by helping families gain access to health care, we can give families the resources they need to give their children a better future.

The bill provides access to health care for 4 million children in America who are currently uninsured and preserves the coverage for all 7.1 million children currently covered by SCHIP. It is supported by 80 percent of the American people and over 300 organizations—including large majorities of Democrats,

Independents and Republicans. The bill will extend coverage to 4.1 million additional low-income, uninsured children, covering a total of 11 million, and is likely to be one of the first signed into law by President Barack Obama. Last year, President Bush vetoed this vital health legislation that was passed by both chambers of Congress.

The State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) was created in 1997 to provide health care coverage for children in families that earn too little to afford health insurance for their children themselves but too much to qualify for Medicaid. This bill will give states the resources and incentives necessary to reach and cover millions of uninsured children who are currently eligible, but not enrolled. It will also improve SCHIP benefits—ensuring dental coverage and mental health parity. This bill is largely paid for by increasing the tobacco tax by 61 cents, and will help keep kids and families healthy while saving taxpayers money in the long-run.

Expanding SCHIP is an important step forward, but we still must keep fight to make healthcare available and affordable for all Americans. As we reform our health care system, we need to focus on accessible, patient-centered care that focuses on wellness and prevention, while improving the quality of patient care. We will continue to fight to expand SCHIP and make health care available and affordable for Minnesota children and their parents.

As we start the new Congress and the new administration I can think of no better way to bring about change than by investing in our children's health care. It is morally right, and crucial for the future of our Nation. I urge my colleagues to join me in voting for this important bill.

HONORING TONY DUNGY, INDIANAPOLIS COLTS HEAD COACH

HON. ANDRÉ CARSON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 15, 2009

Mr. CARSON of Indiana. Madam Speaker, today I rise to honor Tony Dungy, head coach of the Indianapolis Colts, who after more than 30 years in football has announced his retirement.

Mr. Dungy's stellar career in professional football began on the field, where he won a Super Bowl Championship as a member of the 1978 Pittsburgh Steelers. Years later, this experience led to his hiring as the youngest assistant coach in the NFL at the age of 25.

His respectful coaching style and emphasis on both personal and athletic growth has made Mr. Dungy one of the most successful and well regarded coaches in the NFL. His unique coaching style led the Colts to seven consecutive playoff appearances, including a victory in Super Bowl XLI. In 2012, Indianapolis will host its first Super Bowl, in part because of the prestige that Mr. Dungy has brought to the Colts organization.

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