

When we talk about teen violence and crime, it is cigarettes that are the gateway drug. We have got to address this issue. I ask the leadership to address this issue and to have good, strong tobacco legislation to stop young people from smoking.

TAX LIMITATION AMENDMENT IS STRAIGHTFORWARD

Mr. BARTON of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, later this afternoon we are going to have a debate and a vote on the two-thirds tax limitation amendment to the Constitution of the United States.

This amendment is very straightforward. If it passes and it is passed in the Senate and goes to the States and is ratified by three-fourths of the States, it would make it a voting requirement. To pass a tax increase in either body or to expand the tax base would take a two-thirds vote instead of the one-half plus one vote that it now currently takes.

Mr. Speaker, when the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GREEN), my good friend from Houston, was up here earlier talking about all the bad things that might happen and all the programs that might not be funded, I would point out that we are moving into a budget surplus. We would still have those programs. But if we wanted to spend more money, we would have a debate on spending priorities, not on tax increases, unless we could get a consensus. We would need a two-thirds vote in both houses of Congress to pass a tax increase.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to vote for the two-thirds tax limitation amendment.

COMMUNICATION FROM CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma) laid before the House the following communication from the chairman of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure; which was read and, without objection, referred to the Committee on Appropriations:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE,

Washington, DC, March 31, 1998.

Hon. NEWT GINGRICH,
Speaker of the House,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Enclosed are copies of resolutions adopted on March 24, 1998 by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. Copies of the resolutions are being transmitted to the Department of the Army. With kind personal regards, I am

Sincerely,

BUD SHUSTER, *Chairman.*

Enclosures.

RESOLUTION

[Docket 2551—Bronx River Basin, New York]

Resolved by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the United

States House of Representatives, That the Secretary of the Army is requested to review the report of the Chief of Engineers on the Bronx River, New York, published as House Document 897, 62nd Congress, 2nd Session, and other pertinent reports, to determine whether any modifications of the recommendations contained therein are advisable at the present time, in the interest of water resources development, including flood control, environmental restoration and protection and other related purposes.

Adopted: March 24, 1998.

Attest.

BUD SHUSTER, *Chairman.*

RESOLUTION

[Docket 2550—Mile Point, Florida]

Resolved by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the United States House of Representatives, That the Secretary of the Army is requested to review the report of the Chief of Engineers on Jacksonville Harbor, Florida, published as House Document 214, 89th Congress, 1st Session, and other pertinent reports to determine whether any modifications of the recommendations contained therein are advisable at the present time in the interest of navigation and other related purposes, with particular reference.

Adopted: March 24, 1998.

Attest.

BUD SHUSTER, *Chairman.*

RESOLUTION

[Docket 2549—Spring Bayou Area, Louisiana]

Resolved by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the United States House of Representatives, That the Secretary of the Army is requested to review the report of the Chief of Engineers on the Mississippi River and Tributaries Project, published as House Document 308, 88th Congress, 2nd Session, to determine whether any modifications of the recommendations contained therein are advisable at the present time in the interest of a comprehensive plan of improvement for environmental restoration and protection, flood damage prevention, improved drainage, and other related purposes in the Spring Bayou area.

Adopted: March 24, 1998.

Attest.

BUD SHUSTER, *Chairman.*

RESOLUTION

[Docket 2548—Rahway River Basin, New Jersey]

Resolved by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the United States House of Representatives, That the Secretary of the Army is requested to review the report of the Chief of Engineers on the Rahway River, New Jersey, published as House Document 67, 89th Congress, and other pertinent reports to determine whether any modifications of the recommendations contained therein are advisable at the present time, in the interest of water resources development, including flood control, environmental restoration and protection and other related purposes.

Adopted: March 24, 1998.

Attest.

BUD SHUSTER, *Chairman.*

There was no objection.

MAKING IN ORDER ON TODAY OR ANY DAY THEREAFTER CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3164, HYDROGRAPHIC SERVICES IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 1998

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that it be in order on today, or on any day thereafter, for

the Speaker, as though pursuant to clause 1(b) of rule XXIII, to declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3164) to describe the hydrographic services functions of the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and for other purposes, and that consideration of the bill proceed according to the following order:

One, the first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. Points of order against consideration of the bill for failure to comply with clause 2(l)(6) of rule XI or section 303(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 are waived.

Two, general debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Resources.

Three, after general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the 5-minute rule.

Four, in lieu of the amendment recommended by the Committee on Resources now printed in the bill, it shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the 5-minute rule the amendment in the nature of a substitute printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD and numbered 1 pursuant to clause 6 of rule XXIII. Each section of that amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read. Points of order against that amendment in the nature of a substitute for failure to comply with clause 5(a) of rule XXI or section 303(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 are waived.

Five, during consideration of the bill for amendment, the Chairman of the Committee of the Whole may accord priority in recognition on the basis of whether the Member offering an amendment has caused it to be printed in the portion of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD designated for that purpose in clause 6 of rule XXIII. Amendments so printed shall be considered as read.

Six, the Chairman of the Committee of the Whole may, one, postpone until a time during further consideration in the Committee of the Whole a request for a recorded vote on any amendment; and, two, reduce to 5 minutes the minimum time for electronic voting on any postponed question that follows another electronic vote without intervening business, provided that the minimum time for electronic voting in the first in any series of questions shall be 15 minutes.

Seven, at the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. Any Member may demand a separate vote in the House on any amendment adopted in the Committee of the Whole to the bill or to the amendment in the nature of a substitute made in order as original text.

Eight, the previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Jersey?

There was no objection.

HYDROGRAPHIC SERVICES IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 1998

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of today and rule XXIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 3164.

□ 1043

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 3164) to describe the hydrographic services functions of the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and for other purposes, with Mr. GILLMOR in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the order of the House of today, the bill is considered as having been read the first time.

The gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON) and the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON).

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, the purpose of H.R. 3164 is to speed up the critically needed improvements to our Nation's nautical charting program. Nautical charting receives much less publicity or funding than either highway construction or airline safety, but it is just as important to the United States' economy, particularly in today's world of international trade.

□ 1045

However, funding for nautical charting has been cut in half over the last 15 years, and at the present time it will take nearly 30 years just to bring the minimum number of charts necessary to ensure safe navigation in U.S. waters up to modern standards.

Congress has recognized the need for more support for this program and increased appropriations for nautical charting over the last 4 fiscal years. However, with only three Federal survey ships available, serious efforts to reduce the charting backlog will require a partnership between the Federal Government and private contractors. This process has moved slowly over the last 3 years due to disagreements over the extent of Federal and private responsibilities in ensuring data accuracy.

H.R. 3164 defines these responsibilities, allowing the process of reducing the backlog to proceed more quickly. It authorizes the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to maintain sufficient ships and personnel to certify the accuracy of charts and protect the government from liability.

After this requirement is satisfied, all additional survey work will be carried out by the private sector. H.R. 3164 also sets policy for modernizing tide and current prediction systems in major ports and authorizes increased appropriations for nautical charting and tide and current programs.

At the funding levels authorized in this bill, the survey backlog could be completed at least 30 percent faster, and commercial vessels as well as private boats would be able to take advantage of modern navigational technologies, and have the potential to significantly improve safety and efficiency on our waterways.

Mr. Chairman, investing in these programs yields a huge payoff in both economic competitiveness and environmental protection. We need to make this small investment now in order to protect ourselves from possible serious dangers in the future.

The bill is an important step in the right direction, and I urge all of my colleagues to support it.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

(Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to first commend my good friend, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON), chairman of the Subcommittee on Fisheries Conservation, Wildlife and Oceans, for his leadership and for bringing this piece of legislation to the floor for consideration by this body.

I rise in strong support of H.R. 3164. The need for accurate nautical charts to promote safe navigation was recognized by Thomas Jefferson, who as President in 1807, established a coast survey to produce charts and collect other data needed by mariners. Maritime transportation and the technology used in collecting and disseminating nautical data have changed dramatically since then, but the need for accurate and timely data for safe navigation has not.

Mr. Chairman, in recent years our Federal program to produce nautical charts carried out by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has fallen on hard times. In constant dollars, funding for these activities has fallen 50 percent over the last 25 years.

NOAA currently has only three ships in service collecting charting data, down from 11 vessels in 1971. Yet there is a backlog of some 39,000 square miles of heavily traveled marine areas with inadequate or obsolete surveys. Many of these areas were last surveyed with

weighted lead lines, a technology that Mr. Jefferson would have been familiar with.

With today's tight budgets and rapidly changing technology, Mr. Chairman, there is a recognition that NOAA's nautical charting program needs to be modernized. H.R. 3164 provides a blueprint by which NOAA can continue to provide data vital to the maritime community while allowing the maximum opportunity for the private sector to participate in that process. The subcommittee chairman, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON) has very effectively detailed the specifics of what H.R. 3164 will provide.

Mr. Chairman, suffice it to say, H.R. 3164 establishes clear and appropriate roles for the government and the private sector in the collection, processing and dissemination of nautical data. Importantly, the bill provides NOAA with the flexibility to require the services of contractors based on qualification and not on cost. This change in law is especially important in the collection of hydrographic data where lives and property could be lost if mistakes are made.

Mr. Chairman, in short this is win-win legislation. The private sector benefits from an increased share of NOAA's charting work being outsourced; the government benefits from its being able to avail itself of the latest technology through contractors without being burdened by substantial acquisition costs for capital assets. The public benefits from having more accurate, up-to-date nautical charts produced at lower cost.

In summary, Mr. Chairman, the bill authorizes a total of \$581 million for 5 years for hydrographic and geodetic programs for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The bill also clarifies NOAA's hydrographic responsibilities. It requires NOAA to the greatest extent possible to contract with private sector companies to conduct nautical surveys and prepare nautical charts. It authorizes NOAA to maintain sufficient vessels, equipment and expertise to certify the accuracy of U.S. nautical charts and other hydrographic products.

The bill also establishes a quality assurance program under which NOAA may certify that non-Federal hydrographic products meet Federal standards and provides for the modernization of tide and current measurement systems in major ports.

The measure is intended to enact into law the division of survey and other responsibilities agreed to in 1997 between NOAA and the private sector, and to increase funding for these activities so that the existing backlog of nautical surveys may be more quickly addressed.

Mr. Chairman, I urge my colleagues to support this piece of legislation.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.