6. Conduct of Votes by Electronic Device

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER JANUARY 4, 1995

The Chair wishes to enunciate a clear policy with respect to the conduct of electronic votes.

As Members are aware, clause 5 of rule XV provides that Members shall have not less than 15 minutes in which to answer an ordinary rollcall vote or quorum call. The rule obviously establishes 15 minutes as a minimum. Still, with the cooperation of the Members, a vote can easily be completed in that time. The events of October 30, 1991, stand out as proof of this point. On that occasion, the House was considering a bill in the Committee of the Whole under a special rule that placed an overall time limit on the amendment process, including the time consumed by rollcalls. The Chair announced, and then strictly enforced, a policy of closing electronic votes as soon as possible after the guaranteed period of 15 minutes. Members appreciated and cooperated with the Chair's enforcement of the policy on that occasion.

The Chair desires that the example of October 30, 1991, be made the regular practice of the House. To that end, the Chair enlists the assistance of all Members in avoiding the unnecessary loss of time in conducting the business of the House. The Chair encourages all Members to depart for the Chamber promptly upon the appropriate bell and light signal. As in recent Congresses, the cloakrooms should not forward to the Chair requests to hold a vote by electronic device, but should simply apprise inquiring Members of the time remaining on the voting clock.

Although no occupant of the Chair would prevent a Member who is in the well of the chamber before the announcement of the result from casting his or her vote, each occupant of the Chair will have the full support of the Speaker in striving to close each electronic vote at the earliest opportunity. Members should not rely on signals relayed from outside the chamber to assume that votes will be held open until they arrive in the chamber.

7. Requests for Leave of Committees to Sit During the Five-Minute Rule

The SPEAKER'S statement in the 98th Congress on March 3, 1983, with respect to requests for leave of committees to sit during the five-minute rule, will again apply during the 104th Congress, except that the Chair, under clause 2 of rule XI, may entertain a motion of the Majority Leader granting such leave to one or more committees.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER, MARCH 3, 1983

The SPEAKER. The Chair announces that he will recognize Members to make requests for committees to sit during the 5-minute rule only at certain times during the legislative day. While the precedents indicate that such requests when pending are not votes requiring the presence of a quorum, the Chair wishes to avoid the need for a call of the House pending such requests but at the same time to assure predictability as to when he will accord recognition. Therefore, the Speaker intends to set up the following guidelines:

First as has been established by precedent, permission to sit shall require unanimous consent if the permission pertains to a day for which the program has not been announced. Thus, prior to the announcement of the legislative program for the following week, only one objection would be required to prevent a committee from sitting. Following the announcement by the Majority Leader, or his designee, of the program for the next week, the Chair would entertain requests for committees to sit during the following week and 10 objections would then be required. The Chair wants it to be clearly understood that the first available opportunity in the House following the announcement of the program is an appropriate time for considering requests pertaining to the following week if the announcement comes before the completion of all legislative business.

Second, the Chair will not entertain requests on days when all votes on legislative matters have been postponed to a later date; however, the Chair will accept requests for committee hearings to be held later in the week if the request has the concurrence of the ranking minority member of the committee or subcommittee.

Third, on days when legislative business is to be conducted, and when rollcall votes are in order on legislation, the Chair will recognize during the 1-minute period only when he is assured that the ranking minority member of the committee or subcommittee involved supports the requests for the hearings or meetings.

Requests that have been objected to by 10 or more Members pursuant to clause 2(i) of Rule XI may not be renewed on the same day unless the Chair is assured that the objections have been withdrawn. The Chair will in no instance entertain requests after the legislative business of the day has been concluded; that is, after leaves of absence have been laid down or unanimous consent requests from the majority and minority tables have been entertained at the end of the day.

□ 0220

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, January 4, 1995.

Hon. NEWT GINGRICH,
The Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER. Under Clause 4 of Rule III of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, I herewith designate Ms. Linda Nave, Deputy Clerk, to sign any and all papers and do all other acts for me under the name of the Clerk of the House which she would be authorized to do by virtue of this designation, except such as are provided by statute, in case of my temporary absence or disability.

This designation shall remain in effect for the 104th Congress or until modified by me.

With great respect, I am

Sincerely yours,

ROBIN H. CARLE,
Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. If I might before the gentleman from New York [Mr. SOLOMON] moves to adjourn, let the Chair say to the Members that the House has now been in session for some 14 hours and 25 minutes. I think it has been not only the longest and most working-like opening session, but one of the most productive sessions for any single day in House history. The Chair wants to thank both the Democrat Members and the Republican Members for participating. The Chair wants to thank the freshmen on both sides because there was very vigorous and effective involvement, and that is the way it should be. We are in an age when people get elected to do the job from day one, and we are very grateful for their participation. The Chair wishes to express to all Members his immense gratitude for this opening day and how much he hopes this augers well for the future and what we can do together.

INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION

The SPEAKER. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. DINGELL] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I am today introducing five pieces of legislation that received overwhelming bipartisan support in the last Congress. They cover a range of important issues the 104th Congress must address: telecommunications reform, Superfund reform, safe drinking water, and interstate waste and flow control.

These bills are largely the same as the final versions of the legislation written or acted upon by the Commerce Committee or the House in the last Congress. Interstate waste and flow control passed the House by unanimous consent. Safe drinking water was approved under the suspension calendar. Superfund was approved by a 44–0 margin in committee. And the House approved telecommunications reform by a vote of 423–5.

The telecommunications legislation will reform our Nation's outdated telecommunications laws, and create an environment where competition, rather than government regulation, will govern the services that customers will have available. The text of the bill that I am introducing today is identical to last year's, with two exceptions:

First, the requirement for the Justice Department to hold a hearing in every case in which a Bell Operating company requests relief has been deleted. This requirement imposed administrative burdens on the Justice Department, yet served no useful purpose. At the request of the Justice Department, it has been deleted.

Second, there was some confusion last year about a provision that could have delayed Bell Company entry into certain long distance markets as a result of an ambiguity in the statute. During the House consideration of the legislation, Chairman Brooks and I engaged in a colloquy to clarify that ambiguity. I have made changes in the text of the legislation I am introducing today to conform the statutory text with the colloquy.

The interstate waste and flow control bills resolve some long-standing disputes between state and municipal governments, and between different regions of the country. The Superfund reform had the support of a broad coalition of industry, small business, State and local governments, the environmental community, banks, and many