

political purpose. Certainly that is not the intention of this side. I hope it is not anywhere in the body.

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I would just add that clearly there are few if any Members of this body as saintly as Mother Teresa. And we should not only honor her with honorary U.S. citizenship, but use her faith and the action that her faith has led her to us as a model for each of us.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. FLANAGAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. (Mr. MILLER of Florida). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. FLANAGAN] that the House suspend the rules and pass the joint resolution, House Joint Resolution 191, as amended.

The question was taken.

Mr. FLANAGAN. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 5, rule I, and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

FEDERAL COURTS IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 1996

Mr. FLANAGAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3968) to make improvements in the operation and administration of the Federal courts, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 3968

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the "Federal Courts Improvement Act of 1996".

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents of this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

TITLE I—CRIMINAL LAW AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE AMENDMENTS

Sec. 101. New authority for probation and pretrial services officers.

TITLE II—JUDICIAL PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS

Sec. 201. Duties of magistrate judge on emergency assignment.

Sec. 202. Registration of judgments for enforcement in other districts.

Sec. 203. Vacancy in clerk position; absence of clerk.

Sec. 204. Removal of cases against the United States and Federal officers or agencies.

Sec. 205. Appeal route in civil cases decided by magistrate judges with consent.

Sec. 206. Reports by judicial councils relating to misconduct and disability orders.

Sec. 207. Consent to trial in certain criminal actions.

TITLE III—JUDICIARY PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION, BENEFITS, AND PROTECTIONS

Sec. 301. Refund of contribution for deceased deferred annuitant under the Judicial Survivors' Annuities System.

Sec. 302. Bankruptcy judges reappointment procedure.

Sec. 303. Technical correction related to commencement date of temporary judgeships.

Sec. 304. Full-time status of court reporters.

Sec. 305. Court interpreters.

Sec. 306. Technical amendment related to commencement date of temporary bankruptcy judgeships.

Sec. 307. Contribution rate for senior judges under the Judicial Survivors' Annuities System.

Sec. 308. Proceedings on complaints against judicial conduct.

TITLE IV—JUDICIAL FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION

Sec. 401. Increase in civil action filing fee.

Sec. 402. Interpreter performance examination fees.

Sec. 403. Judicial panel on multidistrict litigation.

Sec. 404. Disposition of fees.

TITLE V—FEDERAL COURTS STUDY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Sec. 501. Qualification of Chief Judge of Court of International Trade.

TITLE VI—PLACES OF HOLDING COURT

Sec. 601. Place of holding court in the Southern District of New York.

Sec. 602. Place of holding court in the Eastern District of Texas.

TITLE VII—MISCELLANEOUS

Sec. 701. Participation in judicial government activities by district, senior, and magistrate judges.

Sec. 702. The Director and Deputy Director of the Administrative Office as officers of the United States.

Sec. 703. Removal of action from State court.

Sec. 704. Federal Judicial Center employee retirement provisions.

Sec. 705. Abolition of the special court, Regional Rail Reorganization Act of 1973.

Sec. 706. Exception of residency requirement for district judges appointed to the Southern District and Eastern District of New York.

Sec. 707. Civil justice expense and delay reduction plans.

Sec. 708. Venue for territorial courts.

TITLE I—CRIMINAL LAW AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE AMENDMENTS

SEC. 101. NEW AUTHORITY FOR PROBATION AND PRETRIAL SERVICES OFFICERS.

(a) PROBATION OFFICERS.—Section 3603 of title 18, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking out "and" at the end of paragraph (8)(B);

(2) by redesignating paragraph (9) as paragraph (10); and

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

"(9) if approved by the court, be authorized to carry firearms under such regulations as the Director of the Administrative Office of the United States Courts may prescribe; and"

(b) PRETRIAL SERVICES OFFICERS.—Section 3154 of title 18, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraph (13) as paragraph (14); and

(2) by inserting after paragraph (12) the following new paragraph:

"(13) If approved by the court, be authorized to carry firearms under such regulations

as the Director of the Administrative Office of the United States Courts may prescribe."

TITLE II—JUDICIAL PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS

SEC. 201. DUTIES OF MAGISTRATE JUDGE ON EMERGENCY ASSIGNMENT.

The first sentence of section 636(f) of title 28, United States Code, is amended by striking out "(a) or (b)" and inserting in lieu thereof "(a), (b), or (c)".

SEC. 202. REGISTRATION OF JUDGMENTS FOR ENFORCEMENT IN OTHER DISTRICTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1963 of title 28, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by amending the section heading to read as follows:

"§1963. Registration of judgments for enforcement in other districts";

(2) in the first sentence—

(A) by striking out "district court" and inserting in lieu thereof "court of appeals, district court, or bankruptcy court"; and

(B) by striking out "such judgment" and all that follows through "Trade," and inserting in lieu thereof "the judgment"; and

(3) by adding at the end thereof the following new undesignated paragraph:

"The procedure prescribed under this section is in addition to other procedures provided by law for the enforcement of judgments."

(b) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for chapter 125 of title 28, United States Code, relating to section 1963 is amended to read as follows:

"1963. Registration of judgments for enforcement in other districts."

SEC. 203. VACANCY IN CLERK POSITION; ABSENCE OF CLERK.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 954 of title 28, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

"§954. Vacancy in clerk position; absence of clerk

"When the office of clerk is vacant, the deputy clerks shall perform the duties of the clerk in the name of the last person who held that office. When the clerk is incapacitated, absent, or otherwise unavailable to perform official duties, the deputy clerks shall perform the duties of the clerk in the name of the clerk. The court may designate a deputy clerk to act temporarily as clerk of the court in his or her own name."

(b) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for chapter 57 of title 28, United States Code, relating to section 954 is amended to read as follows:

"954. Vacancy in clerk position; absence of clerk."

SEC. 204. REMOVAL OF CASES AGAINST THE UNITED STATES AND FEDERAL OFFICERS OR AGENCIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1442 of title 28, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in the section heading by inserting "**or agencies**" after "**officers**"; and

(2) in subsection (a)—

(A) in the matter preceding paragraph (1) by striking out "persons"; and

(B) in paragraph (1) by striking out "Any officer of the United States or any agency thereof, or person acting under him, for any act under color of such office" and inserting in lieu thereof "The United States or any agency thereof or any officer (or any person acting under that officer) of the United States or of any agency thereof, sued in an official or individual capacity for any act under color of such office".

(b) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for chapter 89 of title 28, United States Code, is amended by amending the item relating to section 1442 to read as follows:

"1442. Federal officers or agencies sued or prosecuted."

SEC. 205. APPEAL ROUTE IN CIVIL CASES DECIDED BY MAGISTRATE JUDGES WITH CONSENT.

Section 636 of title 28, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (c)—

(A) in paragraph (3) by striking out "In this circumstance, the" and inserting in lieu thereof "The";

(B) by striking out paragraphs (4) and (5); and

(C) by redesignating paragraphs (6) and (7) as paragraphs (4) and (5); and

(2) in subsection (d) by striking out ", and for the taking and hearing of appeals to the district courts,".

SEC. 206. REPORTS BY JUDICIAL COUNCILS RELATING TO MISCONDUCT AND DISABILITY ORDERS.

Section 332 of title 28, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end thereof the following new subsection:

"(g) No later than January 31 of each year, each judicial council shall submit a report to the Administrative Office of the United States Courts on the number and nature of orders entered under this section during the preceding calendar year that relate to judicial misconduct or disability."

SEC. 207. CONSENT TO TRIAL IN CERTAIN CRIMINAL ACTIONS.

(a) AMENDMENTS TO TITLE 18.—(1) Section 3401(b) of title 18, United States Code, is amended—

(A) in the first sentence by inserting ", other than a petty offense that is a class B misdemeanor charging a motor vehicle offense, a class C misdemeanor, or an infraction," after "misdemeanor";

(B) in the second sentence by inserting "judge" after "magistrate" each place it appears;

(C) by striking out the third sentence and inserting in lieu thereof the following: "The magistrate judge may not proceed to try the case unless the defendant, after such explanation, expressly consents to be tried before the magistrate judge and expressly and specifically waives trial, judgment, and sentencing by a district judge. Any such consent and waiver shall be made in writing or orally on the record."; and

(D) by striking out "judge of the district court" each place it appears and inserting in lieu thereof "district judge".

(2) Section 3401(g) of title 18, United States Code, is amended by striking out the first sentence and inserting in lieu thereof the following: "The magistrate judge may, in a petty offense case involving a juvenile, that is a class B misdemeanor charging a motor vehicle offense, a class C misdemeanor, or an infraction, exercise all powers granted to the district court under chapter 403 of this title. The magistrate judge may, in any other class B or C misdemeanor case involving a juvenile in which consent to trial before a magistrate judge has been filed under subsection (b), exercise all powers granted to the district court under chapter 403 of this title."

(b) AMENDMENTS TO TITLE 28.—Section 636(a) of title 28, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking out ", and" at the end of paragraph (3) and inserting in lieu thereof a semicolon; and

(2) by striking out paragraph (4) and inserting the following:

"(4) the power to enter a sentence for a petty offense that is a class B misdemeanor charging a motor vehicle offense, a class C misdemeanor, or an infraction; and

"(5) the power to enter a sentence for a class A misdemeanor, or a class B or C misdemeanor not covered by paragraph (4), in a case in which the parties have consented."

TITLE III—JUDICIARY PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION, BENEFITS, AND PROTECTIONS

SEC. 301. REFUND OF CONTRIBUTION FOR DECEASED DEFERRED ANNUITANT UNDER THE JUDICIAL SURVIVORS' ANNUITIES SYSTEM.

Section 376(o)(1) of title 28, United States Code, is amended by striking out "or while receiving 'retirement salary,'" and inserting in lieu thereof "while receiving retirement salary, or after filing an election and otherwise complying with the conditions under subsection (b)(2) of this section,".

SEC. 302. BANKRUPTCY JUDGES REAPPOINTMENT PROCEDURE.

Section 120 of the Bankruptcy Amendments and Federal Judgeship Act of 1984 (Public Law 98-353; 28 U.S.C. 152 note), is amended—

(1) in subsection (a) by adding at the end thereof the following new paragraph:

"(3) When filling vacancies, the court of appeals may consider reappointing incumbent bankruptcy judges under procedures prescribed by regulations issued by the Judicial Conference of the United States."; and

(2) in subsection (b) by adding at the end thereof the following: "All incumbent nominees seeking reappointment thereafter may be considered for such a reappointment, pursuant to a majority vote of the judges of the appointing court of appeals, under procedures authorized under subsection (a)(3)."

SEC. 303. TECHNICAL CORRECTION RELATED TO COMMENCEMENT DATE OF TEMPORARY JUDGESHIPS.

Section 203(c) of the Judicial Improvements Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-650; 104 Stat. 5101; 28 U.S.C. 133 note) is amended by adding at the end thereof the following: "For districts named in this subsection for which multiple judgeships are created by this Act, the last of those judgeships filled shall be the judgeship created under this subsection."

SEC. 304. FULL-TIME STATUS OF COURT REPORTERS.

Section 753(e) of title 28, United States Code, is amended by inserting after the first sentence the following: "For the purposes of subchapter III of chapter 83 of title 5 and chapter 84 of such title, a reporter shall be considered a full-time employee during any pay period for which a reporter receives a salary at the annual salary rate fixed for a full-time reporter under the preceding sentence."

SEC. 305. COURT INTERPRETERS.

Section 1827 of title 28, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end thereof the following new subsection:

"(1) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section or section 1828, the presiding judicial officer may appoint a certified or otherwise qualified sign language interpreter to provide services to a party, witness, or other participant in a judicial proceeding, whether or not the proceeding is instituted by the United States, if the presiding judicial officer determines, on such officer's own motion or on the motion of a party or other participant in the proceeding, that such individual suffers from a hearing impairment. The presiding judicial officer shall, subject to the availability of appropriated funds, approve the compensation and expenses payable to sign language interpreters appointed under this subsection in accordance with the schedule of fees prescribed by the Director under subsection (b)(3) of this section."

SEC. 306. TECHNICAL AMENDMENT RELATED TO COMMENCEMENT DATE OF TEMPORARY BANKRUPTCY JUDGESHIPS.

Section 3(b) of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 1992 (Public Law 102-361; 106 Stat. 965; 28 U.S.C. 152 note) is amended in the first sentence by striking out "date of the enact-

ment of this Act" and inserting in lieu thereof "appointment date of the judge named to fill the temporary judgeship position".

SEC. 307. CONTRIBUTION RATE FOR SENIOR JUDGES UNDER THE JUDICIAL SURVIVORS' ANNUITIES SYSTEM.

Section 376(b)(1) of title 28, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

"(b)(1) Every judicial official who files a written notification of his or her intention to come within the purview of this section, in accordance with paragraph (1) of subsection (a) of this section, shall be deemed thereby to consent and agree to having deducted and withheld from his or her salary a sum equal to 2.2 percent of that salary, and a sum equal to 3.5 percent of his or her retirement salary. The deduction from any retirement salary—

"(A) of a justice or judge of the United States retired from regular active service under section 371(b) or section 372(a) of this title,

"(B) of a judge of the United States Court of Federal Claims retired under section 178 of this title, or

"(C) of a judicial official on recall under section 155(b), 373(c)(4), 375, or 636(h) of this title,

shall be an amount equal to 2.2 percent of retirement salary."

SEC. 308. PROCEEDINGS ON COMPLAINTS AGAINST JUDICIAL CONDUCT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 372(c) of title 28, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)—

(A) by inserting "(A)" after "(c)(1)"; and

(B) by adding at the end the following: "In the case of a complaint so identified, the chief judge shall notify the clerk of the court of appeals of the complaint, together with a brief statement of the facts underlying the complaint.

"(B) Complaints filed under subparagraph (A) in one judicial circuit shall be referred to another judicial circuit for proceedings under this subsection, in accordance with a system established by rule by the Judicial Conference, which prescribes the circuits to which the complaints will be referred. The Judicial Conference shall establish and submit to the Congress the system described in the preceding sentence not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this subparagraph."

(2) in paragraph (2)—

(A) by amending the first sentence to read as follows: "Upon receipt of a complaint filed or notice of a complaint identified under paragraph (1) of this subsection, the clerk shall promptly transmit such complaint or (in the case of a complaint identified under paragraph (1)) the statement of facts underlying the complaint to the chief judge of the circuit assigned to conduct proceedings on the complaint in accordance with the system established under paragraph (1)(B) (hereafter in this subsection referred to as the 'chief judge')."; and

(B) in the second sentence by inserting "or statement of facts underlying the complaint (as the case may be)" after "copy of the complaint";

(3) in paragraph (4)(A) by inserting "(to which the complaint or statement of facts underlying the complaint is referred)" after "the circuit";

(4) in paragraph (5)—

(A) in the first sentence by inserting "to which the complaint or statement of facts underlying the complaint is referred" after "the circuit"; and

(B) in the second sentence by striking "the circuit" and inserting "that circuit";

(5) in the first sentence of paragraph (15) by inserting before the period at the end the following: "in which the complaint was filed or identified under paragraph (1)"; and

(6) by amending paragraph (18) to read as follows:

“(18) The Judicial Conference shall prescribe rules, consistent with the preceding provisions of this subsection—

“(A) establishing procedures for the filing of complaints with respect to the conduct of any judge of the United States Court of Federal Claims, the Court of International Trade, or the Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit, and for the investigation and resolution of such complaints; and

“(B) establishing a system for referring complaints filed with respect to the conduct of a judge of any such court to any of the first eleven judicial circuits or to another court for investigation and resolution.

The Judicial Conference shall establish and submit to the Congress the system described in subparagraph (B) not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of the Federal Courts Improvement Act of 1996.”

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section apply to complaints filed on or after the 180th day after the date of the enactment of this Act.

TITLE IV—JUDICIAL FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION

SEC. 401. INCREASE IN CIVIL ACTION FILING FEE.

(a) FILING FEE INCREASE.—Section 1914(a) of title 28, United States Code, is amended by striking out “\$120” and inserting in lieu thereof “\$150”.

(b) DISPOSITION OF INCREASE.—Section 1931 of title 28, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a) by striking out “\$60” and inserting in lieu thereof “\$90”; and

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) by striking out “\$120” and inserting in lieu thereof “\$150”; and

(B) by striking out “\$60” and inserting in lieu thereof “\$90”.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This section shall take effect 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 402. INTERPRETER PERFORMANCE EXAMINATION FEES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1827(g) of title 28, United States Code, is amended by redesignating paragraph (5) as paragraph (6) and inserting after paragraph (4) the following new paragraph:

“(5) If the Director of the Administrative Office of the United States Courts finds it necessary to develop and administer criterion-referenced performance examinations for purposes of certification of interpreters, or other examinations for the selection of otherwise qualified interpreters, the Director may prescribe for each examination a uniform fee for applicants to take such examination. In determining the rate of the fee for each examination, the Director shall consider the fees charged by other organizations for examinations that are similar in scope or nature. Notwithstanding section 3302(b) of title 31, the Director is authorized to provide in any contract or agreement for the development or administration of examinations and the collection of fees that the contractor may retain all or a portion of the fees in payment for the services. Notwithstanding paragraph (6) of this subsection, all fees collected after the effective date of this paragraph and not retained by a contractor shall be deposited in the fund established under section 1931 of this title and shall remain available until expended.”

(b) PAYMENT FOR CONTRACTUAL SERVICES.—Notwithstanding sections 3302(b), 1341, and 1517 of title 31, United States Code, the Director of the Administrative Office of the United States Courts may include in any contract for the development or administration of examinations for interpreters (including such a contract entered into before the date of the enactment of this Act) a provi-

sion which permits the contractor to collect and retain fees in payment for contractual services in accordance with section 1827(g)(5) of title 28, United States Code.

SEC. 403. JUDICIAL PANEL ON MULTIDISTRICT LITIGATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—(1) Chapter 123 of title 28, United States Code, is amended by adding after section 1932 the following new section:

“§ 1933. Judicial Panel on Multidistrict Litigation

“The Judicial Conference of the United States shall prescribe from time to time the fees and costs to be charged and collected by the Judicial Panel on Multidistrict Litigation.”

(2) The table of sections for chapter 123 of title 28, United States Code, is amended by adding after the item relating to section 1931 the following:

“1933. Judicial Panel on Multidistrict Litigation.”

(b) RELATED FEES FOR ACCESS TO INFORMATION.—Section 303(a) of the Judiciary Appropriations Act, 1992 (Public Law 102-140; 105 Stat. 810; 28 U.S.C. 1913 note) is amended in the first sentence by striking out “1926, and 1930” and inserting in lieu thereof “1926, 1930, and 1932”.

SEC. 404. DISPOSITION OF FEES.

(a) DISPOSITION OF ATTORNEY ADMISSION FEES.—For each fee collected for admission of an attorney to practice, as prescribed by the Judicial Conference of the United States pursuant to section 1914 of title 28, United States Code, \$30 of that portion of the fee exceeding \$20 shall be deposited into the special fund of the Treasury established under section 1931 of title 28, United States Code. Any portion exceeding \$5 of the fee for a duplicate certificate of admission or certificate of good standing, as prescribed by the Judicial Conference of the United States pursuant to section 1914 of title 28, United States Code, shall be deposited into the special fund of the Treasury established under section 1931 of title 28, United States Code.

(b) DISPOSITION OF BANKRUPTCY COMPLAINT FILING FEES.—For each fee collected for filing an adversary complaint in a bankruptcy proceeding, as established in Item 6 of the Bankruptcy Court Miscellaneous Fee Schedule prescribed by the Judicial Conference of the United States pursuant to section 1930(b) of title 28, United States Code, the portion of the fee exceeding \$120 shall be deposited into the special fund of the Treasury established under section 1931 of title 28, United States Code.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This section shall take effect 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

TITLE V—FEDERAL COURTS STUDY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

SEC. 501. QUALIFICATION OF CHIEF JUDGE OF COURT OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 11 of title 28, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end thereof the following new section:

“§ 258. Chief judges; precedence of judges

“(a)(1) The chief judge of the Court of International Trade shall be the judge of the court in regular active service who is senior in commission of those judges who—

“(A) are 64 years of age or under;

“(B) have served for 1 year or more as a judge of the court; and

“(C) have not served previously as chief judge.

“(2)(A) In any case in which no judge of the court meets the qualifications under paragraph (1), the youngest judge in regular active service who is 65 years of age or over and who has served as a judge of the court for 1 year or more shall act as the chief judge.

“(B) In any case under subparagraph (A) in which there is no judge of the court in regular active service who has served as a judge of the court for 1 year or more, the judge of the court in regular active service who is senior in commission and who has not served previously as chief judge shall act as the chief judge.

“(3)(A) Except as provided under subparagraph (C), the chief judge serving under paragraph (1) shall serve for a term of 7 years and shall serve after expiration of such term until another judge is eligible under paragraph (1) to serve as chief judge.

“(B) Except as provided under subparagraph (C), a judge of the court acting as chief judge under subparagraph (A) or (B) of paragraph (2) shall serve until a judge meets the qualifications under paragraph (1).

“(C) No judge of the court may serve or act as chief judge of the court after attaining the age of 70 years unless no other judge is qualified to serve as chief judge under paragraph (1) or is qualified to act as chief judge under paragraph (2).

“(b) The chief judge shall have precedence and preside at any session of the court which such judge attends. Other judges of the court shall have precedence and preside according to the seniority of their commissions. Judges whose commissions bear the same date shall have precedence according to seniority in age.

“(c) If the chief judge desires to be relieved of the duties as chief judge while retaining active status as a judge of the court, the chief judge may so certify to the Chief Justice of the United States, and thereafter the chief judge of the court shall be such other judge of the court who is qualified to serve or act as chief judge under subsection (a).

“(d) If a chief judge is temporarily unable to perform the duties as chief judge, such duties shall be performed by the judge of the court in active service, able and qualified to act, who is next in precedence.”

(b) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Chapter 11 of title 28, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in section 251 by striking out subsection (b) and redesignating subsection (c) as subsection (b);

(2) in section 253—

(A) by amending the section heading to read as follows:

“§ 253. Duties of chief judge”;

and

(B) by striking out subsections (d) and (e); and

(3) in the table of sections for chapter 11 of title 28, United States Code—

(A) by amending the item relating to section 253 to read as follows:

“253. Duties of chief judge.”;

and

(B) by adding at the end thereof the following:

“258. Chief judges; precedence of judges.”

(c) APPLICATION.—(1) Notwithstanding the provisions of section 258(a) of title 28, United States Code (as added by subsection (a) of this section), the chief judge of the United States Court of International Trade who is in office on the day before the date of enactment of this Act shall continue to be such chief judge on or after such date until any one of the following events occurs:

(A) The chief judge is relieved of his duties under section 258(c) of title 28, United States Code.

(B) The regular active status of the chief judge is terminated.

(C) The chief judge attains the age of 70 years.

(D) The chief judge has served for a term of 7 years as chief judge.

(2) When the chief judge vacates the position of chief judge under paragraph (1), the position of chief judge of the Court of International Trade shall be filled in accordance with section 258(a) of title 28, United States Code.

TITLE VI—PLACES OF HOLDING COURT

SEC. 601. PLACE OF HOLDING COURT IN THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK.

The last sentence of section 112(b) of title 28, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

"Court for the Southern District shall be held at New York, White Plains, and in the Middletown-Walkkill area of Orange County or such nearby location as may be deemed appropriate."

SEC. 602. PLACE OF HOLDING COURT IN THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS.

(a) The second sentence of section 124(c)(3) of title 28, United States Code, is amended by inserting "and Plano" after "held at Sherman".

(b) Sections 83(b)(1) and 124(c)(6) of title 28, United States Code, are each amended in the last sentence by inserting before the period the following: ", and may be held anywhere within the Federal courthouse in Texarkana that is located astride the State line between Texas and Arkansas".

TITLE VII—MISCELLANEOUS

SEC. 701. PARTICIPATION IN JUDICIAL GOVERNANCE ACTIVITIES BY DISTRICT, SENIOR, AND MAGISTRATE JUDGES.

(a) JUDICIAL CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED STATES.—Section 331 of title 28, United States Code, is amended by striking out the second undesignated paragraph and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

"The district judge to be summoned from each judicial circuit shall be chosen by the circuit and district judges of the circuit and shall serve as a member of the Judicial Conference of the United States for a term of not less than 3 successive years nor more than 5 successive years, as established by majority vote of all circuit and district judges of the circuit. A district judge serving as a member of the Judicial Conference may be either a judge in regular active service or a judge retired from regular active service under section 371(b) of this title."

(b) BOARD OF THE FEDERAL JUDICIAL CENTER.—Section 621 of title 28, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a) by striking out paragraph (2) and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

"(2) two circuit judges, three district judges, one bankruptcy judge, and one magistrate judge, elected by vote of the members of the Judicial Conference of the United States, except that any circuit or district judge so elected may be either a judge in regular active service or a judge retired from regular active service under section 371(b) of this title but shall not be a member of the Judicial Conference of the United States; and"; and

(2) in subsection (b) by striking out "retirement," and inserting in lieu thereof "retirement pursuant to section 371(a) or section 372(a) of this title."

SEC. 702. THE DIRECTOR AND DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE AS OFFICERS OF THE UNITED STATES.

Section 601 of title 28, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end thereof the following: "The Director and Deputy Director shall be deemed to be officers for purposes of title 5, United States Code."

SEC. 703. REMOVAL OF ACTION FROM STATE COURT.

Section 1446(c)(1) of title 28, United States Code, is amended by striking out "petitioner" and inserting in lieu thereof "defendant or defendants".

SEC. 704. FEDERAL JUDICIAL CENTER EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT PROVISIONS.

Section 627(b) of title 28, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in the first sentence by inserting "Deputy Director," before "the professional staff"; and

(2) in the first sentence by inserting "chapter 84 (relating to the Federal Employees' Retirement System)," after "(relating to civil service retirement)".

SEC. 705. ABOLITION OF THE SPECIAL COURT, REGIONAL RAIL REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1973.

(a) ABOLITION OF THE SPECIAL COURT.—Section 209 of the Regional Rail Reorganization Act of 1973 (45 U.S.C. 719) is amended in subsection (b)—

(1) by inserting "(1)" before "Within 30 days after"; and

(2) by adding at the end thereof the following new paragraph:

"(2) The special court referred to in paragraph (1) of this subsection is abolished effective 90 days after the date of the enactment of the Federal Courts Improvement Act of 1996. On such effective date, all jurisdiction and other functions of the special court shall be assumed by the United States District Court for the District of Columbia. With respect to any proceedings that arise or continue after the date on which the special court is abolished, the references in the following provisions to the special court established under this subsection shall be deemed to refer to the United States District Court for the District of Columbia:

"(A) Subsections (c), (e)(1), (e)(2), (f) and (g) of this section.

"(B) Sections 202 (d)(3), (g), 207 (a)(1), (b)(1), (b)(2), 208(d)(2), 301 (e)(2), (g), (k)(3), (k)(15), 303 (a)(1), (a)(2), (b)(1), (b)(6)(A), (c)(1), (c)(2), (c)(3), (c)(4), (c)(5), 304 (a)(1)(B), (i)(3), 305 (c), (d)(1), (d)(2), (d)(3), (d)(4), (d)(5), (d)(8), (e), (f)(1), (f)(2)(B), (f)(2)(D), (f)(2)(E), (f)(3), 306 (a), (b), (c)(4), and 601 (b)(3), (c) of this Act (45 U.S.C. 712 (d)(3), (g), 717 (a)(1), (b)(1), (b)(2), 718(d)(2), 741 (e)(2), (g), (k)(3), (k)(15), 743 (a)(1), (a)(2), (b)(1), (b)(6)(A), (c)(1), (c)(2), (c)(3), (c)(4), (c)(5), 744 (a)(1)(B), (i)(3), 745 (c), (d)(1), (d)(2), (d)(3), (d)(4), (d)(5), (d)(8), (e), (f)(1), (f)(2)(B), (f)(2)(D), (f)(2)(E), (f)(3), 746 (a), (b), (c)(4), 791 (b)(3), (c)).

"(C) Sections 1152(a) and 1167(b) of the Northeast Rail Service Act of 1981 (45 U.S.C. 1105(a), 1115(a)).

"(D) Sections 4023 (2)(A)(iii), (2)(B), (2)(C), (3)(C), (3)(E), (4)(A) and 4025(b) of the Conrail Privatization Act (45 U.S.C. 1323 (2)(A)(iii), (2)(B), (2)(C), (3)(C), (3)(E), (4)(A), 1324(b)).

"(E) Section 24907(b) of title 49, United States Code.

"(F) Any other Federal law (other than this subsection and section 605 of the Federal Courts Improvement Act of 1996), Executive order, rule, regulation, delegation of authority, or document of or relating to the special court as established under paragraph (1) of this subsection."

(b) APPELLATE REVIEW.—(1) Section 209(e) of the Regional Rail Reorganization Act of 1973 (45 U.S.C. 719) is amended by striking paragraph (3) and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

"(3) An order or judgment of the United States District Court for the District of Columbia in any action referred to in this section shall be reviewable in accordance with sections 1291, 1292, and 1294 of title 28, United States Code."

(2) Section 303 of the Regional Rail Reorganization Act of 1973 (45 U.S.C. 743) is amended by striking out subsection (d) and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

"(d) APPEAL.—An order or judgment entered by the United States District Court for the District of Columbia pursuant to subsection (c) of this section or section 306 shall

be reviewable in accordance with sections 1291, 1292, and 1294 of title 28, United States Code."

(3) Section 1152 of the Northeast Rail Service Act of 1981 (45 U.S.C. 1105) is amended by striking out subsection (b) and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

"(b) APPEAL.—An order or judgment of the United States District Court for the District of Columbia in any action referred to in this section shall be reviewable in accordance with sections 1291, 1292, and 1294 of title 28, United States Code."

(c) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—(1) Section 209 of the Regional Rail Reorganization Act of 1973 (45 U.S.C. 719) is amended—

(A) in subsection (g) by inserting "or the Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit" after "Supreme Court"; and

(B) by striking out subsection (h).

(2) Section 305(d)(4) of the Regional Rail Reorganization Act of 1973 (45 U.S.C. 745(d)) is amended by striking out "a judge of the United States district court with respect to such proceedings and such powers shall include those of".

(3) Section 1135(a)(8) of the Northeast Rail Service Act of 1981 (45 U.S.C. 1104(8)) is amended to read as follows:

"(8) 'Special court' means the judicial panel established under section 209(b)(1) of the Regional Rail Reorganization Act of 1973 (45 U.S.C. 719(b)(1)) or, with respect to any proceedings that arise or continue after the panel is abolished pursuant to section 209(b)(2) of such Act, the United States District Court for the District of Columbia."

(4) Section 1152 of the Northeast Rail Service Act of 1981 (45 U.S.C. 1105) is further amended by striking out subsection (d).

(d) PENDING CASES.—Effective 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, any case pending in the special court established under section 209(b) of the Regional Rail Reorganization Act of 1973 (45 U.S.C. 719(b)) shall be assigned to the United States District Court for the District of Columbia as though the case had originally been filed in that court. The amendments made by subsection (b) of this section shall not apply to any final order or judgment entered by the special court for which—

(1) a petition for writ of certiorari has been filed before the date on which the special court is abolished; or

(2) the time for filing a petition for writ of certiorari has not expired before that date.

(e) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsections (b) and (c) of this section shall take effect 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act and, except as provided in subsection (d), shall apply with respect to proceedings that arise or continue on or after such effective date.

SEC. 706. EXCEPTION OF RESIDENCY REQUIREMENT FOR DISTRICT JUDGES APPOINTED TO THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT AND EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK.

Section 134(b) of title 28, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by inserting "the Southern District of New York, and the Eastern District of New York," after "the District of Columbia,";

(2) by inserting "or she" after "he"; and

(3) by inserting at the end the following: "Each district judge of the Southern District of New York and the Eastern District of New York may reside within 20 miles of the district for which he or she is appointed."

SEC. 707. CIVIL JUSTICE EXPENSE AND DELAY REDUCTION PLANS.

(a) AUTHORIZATION OF ARBITRATION.—Section 473(a)(6)(B) of title 28, United States Code, is amended by inserting "arbitration," before "mediation".

(b) REPORT ON DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM.—Section 104(d) of the Civil Justice Reform

Act of 1990 (28 U.S.C. 471 note) is amended by striking out "December 31, 1996," and inserting in lieu thereof "June 30, 1997."

(c) REPORT ON PILOT PROGRAM.—Section 105(c)(1) of the Civil Justice Reform Act of 1990 (28 U.S.C. 471 note) is amended by striking out "December 31, 1996," and inserting in lieu thereof "June 30, 1997."

SEC. 708. VENUE FOR TERRITORIAL COURTS.

(a) CHANGE OF VENUE.—Section 1404(d) of title 28, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

"(d) As used in this section, the term 'district court' includes the District Court of Guam, the District Court for the Northern Mariana Islands, and the District Court of the Virgin Islands, and the term 'district' includes the territorial jurisdiction of each such court."

(b) CURE OR WAIVER OF DEFECTS.—Section 1406(c) of title 28, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

"(c) As used in this section, the term 'district court' includes the District Court of Guam, the District Court for the Northern Mariana Islands, and the District Court of the Virgin Islands, and the term 'district' includes the territorial jurisdiction of each such court."

(c) APPLICABILITY.—The amendments made by this section apply to cases pending on the date of the enactment of this Act and to cases commenced on or after such date.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. FLANAGAN] and the gentlewoman from Colorado [Mrs. Schroeder] each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. FLANAGAN].

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FLANAGAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. FLANAGAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3968, the Federal Courts Improvement Act of 1996. This legislation embodies a series of proposals pertaining to the Federal courts system and the administration thereof, that have been endorsed by the Judicial Conference of the United States. The provisions of the bill address administrative, financial, personnel, organizational, and technical changes that are needed by the courts and their supporting agencies. H.R. 3968 represents a scaled-back version of earlier legislation, H.R. 1989, that my colleague from Colorado, Mrs. SCHROEDER and Chairman MOORHEAD introduced at the request of the judicial conference.

The provisions in H.R. 3968 are non-controversial and affect a wide range of judicial branch programs and operations. The reappointment procedure of bankruptcy judges is simplified and the term definition of certain temporary bankruptcy judgeships is clarified. Provisions affecting court reporters, court interpreters, and employees of the administrative office of the U.S. Courts are included. The bill corrects incon-

sistencies in the operations of the Judicial Survivors' Annuities System and civil action filing fees and other user fees are increased for the first time in 10 years. Clarification of statutory removal and venue provisions are made, as well as other changes. I think it is clear that H.R. 3968 will have a positive impact on the operations of the Federal courts and enhance the delivery of justice in the Federal system and I urge my colleagues' support for the legislation.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. FLANAGAN. I yield to the gentleman from New York.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. I want to thank him for bringing this measure to the floor. I thank the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support for H.R. 3968, the Federal Courts Improvement Act. I want to thank Chairman MOORHEAD for all of his hard work on this bill and for the inclusion of section 601, title VI, which establishes the Middletown-Wallkill Area of Orange County, NY, as a place for court proceedings in the southern district of New York.

The need for a Federal court facility in the Middletown-Wallkill Area is genuine and well founded. This issue has been considered and approved by all of the judges of the southern district of New York, all of the members of the judicial council of the second circuit, as well as the Judicial Conference of the United States.

As Chairman MOORHEAD knows, the judicial conference takes the issue of establishing a place for holding court very seriously and studies all requests fully before granting any approval. I am confident that the importance of this fact will be duly recognized by the Senate during consideration of this matter.

I look forward to working with Chairman MOORHEAD on the Middletown-Wallkill Court facility issue, and I again thank him for his efforts on behalf of the southern district of New York.

Accordingly, I urge my colleagues to fully support his bill.

Mr. FLANAGAN. I thank the distinguished chairman for his remarks.

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

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mrs. SCHROEDER asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Mr. Speaker, I clearly rise in support of this bill, and I really want to thank the chairman of the subcommittee, CARLOS MOORHEAD, from California, who has done such a wonderful job to move this bill in the very short period of time we have left.

We worked very hard to take this bill, which came at the request of the judicial conference, to put in it every

single thing we could, but we also tried to make sure that we minimized controversy so we could maximize the results and get it done. We full well knew that there was not going to be time to bring controversial things or have long hearings. In the end, I think we have done a very good job of getting as much as we possibly can at this time that will be noncontroversial.

I am particularly pleased this bill includes a provision that will produce considerable efficiency gains for the Federal courts by providing for trial before magistrate judges in most petty offense cases, while at the same time we can protect the right to trial before a district judge in all class B misdemeanors.

□ 1530

That may sound like gobbledygook to most people, but it will help the efficiency of the courts.

In language that was approved by the Committee on the Judiciary, it differs a little bit from that proposed by the Judicial Conference, because the committee did recognize that class B misdemeanors do carry the potential for a level of punishment many people would consider to be significant.

We want to recognize the special needs of those districts that have this very high caseload of petty offenses that are Federal cases only because of the accident of geography; that is, the offense occurred on Federal property, therefore, it goes into a Federal court.

We realized that clutters the court, but, at the same time, we drew the line making sure that there were some core Federal law concerns, such as illegal entry charges under our immigration laws that would give people access to a title III judge and it was terribly important that we preserve that part.

So that is the real main difference from what the Judicial Conference asked us to do, but we did it and I think it is going to be fine.

I really join the gentleman from California and the gentleman from Illinois in urging my colleagues to support this bill so that we can do everything we can to help the Judicial Conference move forward efficiently.

Mr. FLANAGAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume to thank the gentlewoman for her remarks and her support for the bill, one she has worked so hard to move forward.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California [Mr. MOORHEAD], the distinguished chairman of the subcommittee.

Mr. MOORHEAD. Mr. Speaker, I wish to at this time thank the gentlewoman from Colorado [Mrs. SCHROEDER] for the work that she has done for this subcommittee during this 2-year period. It has been outstanding with her assistance, and she has been a great, great help to the committee during that time.

Betty Wheeler, who is her counsel, has certainly done a marvelous job in

all the work she has done, along with our staff on our side of the aisle. All of the staff have been outstanding this year. This is the culmination, one of the fine pieces of legislation that we have gotten out of the committee.

H.R. 1989 was the original bill that was introduced by the gentlewoman from Colorado [Mrs. SCHROEDER] and myself, and H.R. 3968 represents a scaled-back version of that bill. But it is a fine piece of legislation that has been requested by the Judicial Conference, and I know that it will improve the general laws of the United States relating to the courts.

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California [Ms. LOFGREN].

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to say something briefly about the gentlewoman from Colorado [Mrs. SCHROEDER] and the gentleman from California [Mr. MOORHEAD].

As a new Member of this Congress and of the Committee on the Judiciary, I do not know that they have received sufficient praise for the really excellent bipartisan work that they have done in this Congress on issues that really matter in patent law and other areas that just are so sensible.

Clearly, there are things they do not agree on, and they are very open about that, but they work together in a bipartisan way. They have made the country a better place as a consequence, and I, for one, commend them and thank them, and I am going to miss them both in the next Congress, if the voters send me back.

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman.

Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. FLANAGAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume to associate myself with the remarks of the gentlewoman from California [Ms. LOFGREN].

As has been the case, I have remarked on three separate occasions so far in this Congress, this is yet another worthy chairman and a ranking member that are retiring together, and what a fine job they have done through decades of service to the Congress. I thank them both for not only their fine work on this bill but the good work they have done through the years.

Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California [Mr. MOORHEAD] that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3968, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CLARIFYING RULES GOVERNING REMOVAL OF CASES TO FEDERAL COURT

Mr. MOORHEAD. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill (S. 533) to clarify the rules governing removal of cases to Federal court, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

S. 533

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

SECTION 1. REMOVAL.

The first sentence of section 1447(c) of title 28, United States Code, is amended by striking "any defect in removal procedure" and inserting "any defect other than lack of subject matter jurisdiction".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California [Mr. MOORHEAD] and the gentlewoman from Colorado [Mrs. SCHROEDER] each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California [Mr. MOORHEAD].

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MOORHEAD. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on S. 533.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. MOORHEAD. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Today, I rise in support of S. 533. In the Judicial Improvements and Access to Justice Act of 1988, Congress required under section 1447(c) of title 28 of the United States Code that a "motion to remand the case on the basis of any defect in removal must be made within 30 days after the filing of the notice of removal under section 1446(a)."

The intent of the Congress is not entirely clear from the current wording of section 1447(c), and courts have interpreted it differently. S. 533 merely clarifies the intent of the Congress that a motion to remand a case on the basis of any defect other than subject matter jurisdiction must be made within 30 days after the filing of the notice of removal under section 1446(a).

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

Ms. SCHROEDER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 533, to clarify the rule governing removal of cases.

As the gentleman from California has noted, this is a technical clarification made necessary by some language in section 1447(c) of title 28 that is not as clear as it should be.

Section 1447(c) requires motions to remand based on "any defect in removal procedure" to be filed within 30

days of the filing of the notice of removal. This language is unclear because no time limit applies to motions to remand based on lack of subject matter jurisdiction. S. 533 clarifies that "defect" encompasses any defect other than subject matter jurisdiction.

This correction is necessary to remove the ambiguity in the law. I urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MOORHEAD. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California [Mr. MOORHEAD] that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill, S. 533.

The question was taken.

Mr. MOORHEAD. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 5, rule I, and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

REPEALING A REDUNDANT VENUE PROVISION

Mr. MOORHEAD. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill (S. 677) to repeal a redundant venue provision, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

S. 677

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

SECTION 1. REPEAL.

(a) REPEAL.—Subsection (a) of section 1392 of title 28, United States Code, is repealed.

(b) TECHNICAL AMENDMENT.—Subsection (b) of section 1392 of title 28, United States Code, is amended by striking "(b) Any" and inserting "Any".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California [Mr. MOORHEAD] and the gentlewoman from Colorado [Mrs. SCHROEDER] each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California [Mr. MOORHEAD].

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MOORHEAD. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on S. 677.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. MOORHEAD. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, today, I rise in support of S. 677. S. 677 implements a proposal made by the Judicial Conference of the