

HAPPY TO HAVE BEEN A PART OF  
THE 105TH

(Mr. TIAHRT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, we have heard this morning that this was a quote, unquote, do-nothing Congress. I think the liberals think that because nothing has happened for the left. I think they must have been hiding under their desk. They did start out wanting to spend 150 billion more dollars on new government programs. They wanted to raise taxes by \$130 billion, but we did not let that happen. We did balance the federal budget, we do have a \$70 billion surplus, we have been able to strengthen families, strengthen their pocketbooks through lower interest rates. We have been able to strengthen our military. Right now we cannot conduct a similar scenario like the Gulf War, but we are going to strengthen the military. We also provided the first steps for strengthening Social Security and Medicare.

Now the left can claim they got 100,000 new teachers, but nobody over there has done the math. If they figure out the math, they only got \$10,000 per teacher. Who is going to make up the difference? Can they find a teacher who will work for \$10,000 a year?

Well, Republicans have a good program for saving schools, for making them stronger by getting parents involved. We have done that this year in the 105th Congress. It has been a good Congress, a successful Congress, and I am happy to be a part of it.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER  
PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BRADY of Texas). Pursuant to the provisions of clause 5 of rule I, the Chair announces that he will postpone further proceedings today on each motion to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 4 of rule XV.

Such rollcall votes, if postponed, will be taken on Tuesday, October 20, 1998.

PLANT PATENT AMENDMENTS  
ACTS OF 1997

Mr. COBLE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendment to the bill (H.R. 1197) to amend title 35, United States Code, to protect patent owners against the unauthorized sale of plant parts taken from plants illegally reproduced, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

Senate amendment:

Page 4, after line 14 insert:

**SEC. 4. ACCESS TO ELECTRONIC PATENT INFORMATION.**

(a) IN GENERAL.—The United States Patent and Trademark Office shall develop and implement statewide computer networks with remote library sites in requesting rural

States such that citizens in those States will have enhanced access to information in their State's patent and trademark depository library.

(b) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term "rural States" means the States that qualified on January 1, 1997, as rural States under section 1501(b) of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3799b(b)).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. COBLE) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. COBLE).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. COBLE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days 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 North Carolina?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, this is a noncontroversial measure that will serve as a needed compliment to current plant patent law which we passed under suspension of the rules on October 9 of this year. The other body has also amended the bill by adding a provision that will enable small inventors living in rural areas greater access to patent information.

The first provision of H.R. 1197 amends current law governing plant patent parts. Since 1930 the Patent Act has permitted inventors to obtain plant patents. Individuals wishing to skirt protections available under the law have discovered a loophole, however, by trading in plant parts taken from illegally produced plants. H.R. 1197 closes this loophole by explicitly protecting plant parts to the same extent as plants under the Patent Act.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is identical to language that was contained in the omnibus patent legislation which passed earlier in the term. There is no opposition to the bill as it will benefit American patentholders and the plant producers as well who honor their work by paying the necessary royalties.

The second provision of the bill simply authorizes the Patent and Trademark Office to develop and implement statewide computer networks with remote library sites, thereby enabling small inventors to have greater access to information in patent and trademark depository libraries.

I repeat, Mr. Speaker, I think the amendment that was done in the other body makes a good bill even better, and I think it will benefit our nation's inventors, Mr. Speaker, and I urge its adoption.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I use this excuse to support the bill to commend my sub-

committee chairman, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. COBLE) for a year's worth of very good cooperation, a Congress worth of very good cooperation. He is unique, and we have been able to work through many problems that have actually confounded the Committee on the Judiciary for more than a year or two, and this has been a successful relationship between those Members, the subcommittee members and the Members on my side.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am happy to support the plant patent bill, commend our colleague, ranking colleague from Vermont on the other side, Senator PAT LEAHY, and I urge that we support the provisions here that correct a loophole that has arisen as some people have sought to trade in plants; that is in the environmental sense plant parts taken from illegally produced plants, and we specifically are protecting these additional plants as well, and I commend the members of the Committee on the Judiciary for working so well together on this measure.

I rise in strong support of this little noticed, but important change to our patent laws.

This legislation protects plant parts to the same extent as plants themselves are protected under the Patent Act. The holders of plant patents, the same as an other American who develops a patent and follows the rules, are entitled to protection.

As Mr. COBLE has noted, a loophole in the plant patent area has arisen in recent years as some individuals have sought to trade in plant parts taken from illegally produced plants. This legislation closes this loophole by specifically protecting the plant parts. This language is identical to language from the omnibus patent bill which passed the House earlier this session.

The legislation before us also includes a provision which authorizes the Patent and Trademark Office to develop and implement statewide computer networks with remote library sites. This will allow small inventors in rural areas to have greater access to patent and trademark information.

While I have some time remaining, I would like to congratulate my good friend the gentleman from North Carolina, Mr. COBLE, for the excellent work he has done as chairman of the Judiciary Subcommittee on Courts and Intellectual Property. In recent weeks he has succeeded in passing a number of landmark intellectual property bills, including copyright extension and implementation of the World Intellectual Property Organization Treaties. Thanks to Mr. COBLE's stewardship, our creators and inventors can rest assured that they will receive fair compensation for their work. Because of the rush of business at the end of the calendar, other important measures relating to data base protection and patent reform were not completed, but we will continue to push these measures on a bipartisan basis next Congress.

I would also like to thank Chairman COBLE for his hard work on important franchise legislation that he and I introduced 2 days ago. I look forward to working with him on this matter of vital importance to so many small businesses early on in the next Congress.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, so I yield back the balance of my time.