AMENDMENT TO THE PREAMBLE OFFERED BY MR. GILMAN

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I offer an amendment to the preamble.

The Clerk read as follows:

Amendment to the preamble offered by Mr. GILMAN:

Strike the preamble and insert the following:

Whereas United States Army Staff Sgt. Andrew A. Ramirez, 24, of Los Angeles; Staff Sgt. Christopher J. Stone, 25, of Smiths Creek, Michigan and San Antonio Texas, and Spc. Steven M. Gonzales, 21, of Huntsville, Texas were captured on March 31, 1999, while patrolling the Kumanovo area;

Whereas these 3 honorable United States soldiers are now in the custody of the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and its President Slobodan Milosevic;

Whereas the Geneva Conventions, the 1949 treaties setting forth international requirements for the treatment of both civilians and military personnel during armed conflicts, stipulates that prisoners of war must at all times be humanely treated, provided any necessary medical assistance, protected against acts of violence or intimidation and against insults and public curiosity and evacuated from any area of danger;

Whereas the Third Geneva Convention also prohibits putting prisoners of war on trial for engaging in ordinary acts of warfare for which the capturing country's own soldiers would not be charged;

Whereas under the Geneva Conventions, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has the right to nonsupervised visits of prisoners to ensure they are being treated well;

Whereas the Yugoslav Government has as yet not responded to the ICRC's requests; and

Whereas sanctions can be applied to parties to the Geneva Conventions for failing to abide by the conventions: Now, therefore, be it:

Mr. GILMAN (during the reading). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the amendment be considered as read and printed in the RECORD.

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

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the amendment to the preamble offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN).

The amendment to the preamble was agreed to.

TITLE AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. GILMAN

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I offer an amendment to the title.

The Clerk read as follows:

Title amendment offered by Mr. GILMAN:

Amend the title so as to read: ''Concurrent resolution expressing the sense of the Congress that the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and its President Slobodan Milosevic release the three detained United States servicemen and abide by the Geneva Conventions regarding the treatment of both prisoners of war and civilians.''.

The title amendment was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ADJOURNMENT TO MONDAY, APRIL 19, 1999

Mr. NETHERCUTT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 2 p.m. on Monday next.

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

There was no objection.

HOUR OF MEETING ON TUESDAY, APRIL 20, 1999

Mr. NETHERCUTT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns on Monday, April 19, 1999, it adjourn to meet at 12:30 p.m. on Tuesday, April 20, for morning hour debates.

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

There was no objection.

DISPENSING WITH CALENDAR WEDNESDAY BUSINESS ON WEDNESDAY NEXT

Mr. NETHERCUTT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the business in order under the Calendar Wednesday rule be dispensed with on Wednesday next.

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

There was no objection.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. NORTON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

CHILD SUPPORT COLLECTION REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, it is tax day in America. On April 15 each year, each of us has dutifully fulfilled our duty. We have filled out forms, written checks, and stood or are standing in long lines at the post office. We do this because it is our obligation and because it is the law.

Well, many parents have another obligation under the law, and that is to pay support for their children. But four out of five noncustodial parents simply do not pay, and they are getting away scot-free.

Mr. Speaker, such irresponsibility not only hurts their own children but drains the Federal budget and causes the deficit that we fill with our tax dollars, a deficit that increases with increased demand on welfare and other Federal programs that our children need for those of us living up to our responsibilities.

This is simply unfair. And most of all, it is unfair and outright cruel for the children involved. When a parent fails to pay child support, children hear a clear message. The message is that they do not matter.

The gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE) and I believe that it is time to show these children that they do matter, it is time for us as a Nation to care as much about our children as we do about the IRS. That is why today we unveiled legislation to put the Federal Government in charge of collecting child support.

As many people know, I have a very special interest in reforming child support collection. I know firsthand about the difficulty of not receiving child support because 30 years ago I was left to fend for my three children, 1, 3, and 5 years old, when their father did not pay 1 cent of child support.

□ 1630

With no means to collect child support, even though I was employed, I went on welfare to make ends meet. Had we received the child support that was due us, we would not have been on welfare.

The legislation that the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE) and I are introducing today, the Compassion for Children and Child Support Enforcement Act, makes paying child support as important as paying taxes, and it makes sure that deadbeat parents know it. Simply put, our bill will federalize child support collection and disbursement. Court-ordered support payments would simply be withheld from an employee's pay, just like other payroll deductions. It is easy, it is efficient, and it will work better than the fragmented State-by-State system now in place. After billions of dollars of Federal assistance, States still collect only 22 percent of what children are owed.

Now, to be fair, that is an increase, because 2 years ago child support collection rates were only 20 percent. But if we wait for collection to go up 2 percent each year, custodial parents will be collecting Social Security before they collect child support. Our kids cannot afford to wait that long.

In my home State of California, our children will have an even longer wait under the current system. California is one of nine States without a Statewide tracking system up and running. California has wasted $200 million to build a system which has never gotten off the ground. Without a system in place, our State could face $400 million in fines by the year 2002 for failing to meet Federal deadlines.

This failure is a shame. It is a disaster for California's children. But beyond that, it demonstrates the most fundamental flaw in the current system. A chain is only as strong as its