to add the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday to the list of days on which the flag should especially be displayed, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the Senate bill.

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

Mr. BENTSEN. Reserving the right to object, Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MCCOLLUM) for an explanation.

Mr. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, this text is virtually identical to the Martin Luther King corrections bill we just passed in the House. It has already passed the Senate. This way we can send it immediately to the President, and it becomes law, and it is purely technical in that regard. But I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my reservation of objection.

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

There was no objection.

The Clerk read the Senate bill, as follows:

S. 322

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

SECTION 1. ADDITION OF MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. HOLIDAY TO LIST OF DAYS.

Section 6(d) of title 4, United States Code, is amended by inserting ''Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday, third Monday in January;'' after ''January 20;''.

The Senate bill was ordered to be read a third time, was read the third time, and passed, and a motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

A similar House bill (H.R. 576) was laid on the table.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Sherman Williams, one of his secretaries.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the provisions of clause 8 of rule XX, 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 6 of rule XX.

Such rollcall votes, if postponed, will be taken after debate has concluded on all motions to suspend the rules, but not before 6 p.m. today.

FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ANIMAL PROTECTION ACT OF 1999

Mr. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1791) to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide penalties for harming animals used in Federal law enforcement, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 1791

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Federal Law Enforcement Animal Protection Act of 1999''.

SEC. 2. HARMING ANIMALS USED IN LAW ENFORCEMENT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 65 of title 18, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''§ 1368. Harming animals used in law enforcement

''(a) Whoever willfully and maliciously harms any police animal, or attempts to conspires to do so, shall be fined under this title and imprisoned not more than one year. If the offense permanently disables or disfigures the animal, or causes serious bodily injury or the death of the animal, the maximum term of imprisonment shall be 10 years.

''(b) In this section, the term 'police animal' means a dog or horse employed by a Federal agency (whether in the executive, legislative, or judicial branch) for the principal purpose of aiding in the detection of criminal activity, enforcement of laws, or apprehension of criminal offenders.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 65 of title 18, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new item:

''1368. Harming animals used in law enforcement.''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MCCOLLUM) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MCCOLLUM).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 1791, the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

The Federal Law Enforcement Animal Protection Act of 1999 was introduced by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) and passed both the Subcommittee on Crime and the full Committee on the Judiciary by voice votes. This bill proposes to add a new section to the Federal Criminal Code that would make it a crime to willfully and maliciously harm any police animal or attempt to conspire or attempt or conspire to do so. The bill defines police animal as a dog or horse employed by a Federal agency for the principle purpose of detecting criminal activity, enforcing the laws or apprehending criminal offenders.

Under current law, harming an animal used by the Federal Government for law enforcement purposes can only be punished under the statute that punishes damage to government property. The statute imposes punishment based on the value of the damage done in monetary terms. Under that statute a criminal who kills a police dog might receive only a misdemeanor sentence due to the low monetary value of the dog; but, as we all know, the government spends a considerable amount of time and money to train these animals. And the government employees who use these dogs during the course of their law enforcement work often form a close bond with them, and so their work can suffer when the animal they work with each day is harmed.

In many cases these animals have prevented harm to citizens and even saved the lives of children, and so it is appropriate that we punish criminal acts towards these animals more harshly than we punish damage done to inanimate government property. Under the bill, the maximum punishment that could be imposed for harming a police animal is 1 year in prison. If the offense permanently disables or disfigures the animal or results in the serious bodily injury or death of the animal, the maximum punishment that can be imposed increases to 10 years in prisonment.

I support the bill. I believe the bill strikes the right balance. I thank the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) for his leadership in bringing this issue to the attention of the Committee on the Judiciary, and I urge all my colleagues to support it.

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

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

Under current law, Mr. Speaker, as the gentleman has indicated, damage from an animal owned by the Federal Government is punishable as destruction of Federal property. More specifically, willful harm to an animal owned by the Federal Government whose damage or injury is valued at less than a thousand dollars and results in a 1-year maximum imprisonment if the damage exceeds the thousand dollars, the maximum punishment is 10 years.

One problem with the provision is that police dogs rarely have a technical value which exceeds a thousand dollars, so no matter how vicious or cruel the offense, under current law the felony provisions cannot be invoked. H.R. 1791, the Federal Law Enforcement Animal Protection Act of 1999, would make it a crime to willfully harm any police animal or attempt to do so. The maximum punishment would be 1 year imprisonment unless that harm inflicted disables or disfigures the animal, in which case the maximum penalty would increase to 10 years.

At full committee markup, the amendments were offered to specify that we are talking about an act done out of malice to the animal as opposed to simply responding to an attack by the animal and to establish a clear line between the felony injury and the misdemeanor. The amendments were accepted and were incorporated in the bill as we are now considering it.