

amendment to the Committee on Rules in room H-312 of the Capitol no later than 6 p.m. on Tuesday, March 18.

As in past years, Mr. Speaker, the Committee on Rules intends to give priority to amendments offered as complete substitutes. Members are advised that the text of the concurrent resolution, as ordered reported by the Committee on the Budget, should be available on the Web sites of both the Committee on the Budget and the Committee on Rules no later than Friday, March 14. Members should use the Office of Legislative Counsel to ensure their amendments are properly drafted and should check with the Office of the Parliamentarian to be certain their amendments comply with the rules of the House.

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

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

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I wish to inquire of the distinguished majority leader the schedule for the coming week.

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

Mr. HOYER. I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished whip for yielding to me.

Mr. Speaker, the House will convene on Tuesday at 12:30 p.m. for morning hour and 2 p.m. for legislative business. We will consider several measures under suspension of the rules, and a final list of the bills will be sent to the Members' offices early next week.

I might alert the Members, Mr. Speaker, that in a change from our traditional schedule, I would like to put the Members on notice that we plan to vote one-half hour earlier than usual on Tuesday, at 6 p.m. Members from both sides of the aisle have asked for flexibility this Tuesday because a number of them and their spouses are involved in the annual March of Dimes Dinner Gala, which begins at 6:30. So Members should be aware that we are still trying to work it out with the minority, but be aware that they could be notified that votes will start at 6 p.m. Tuesday rather than the normal 6:30.

Next week we expect to consider H.R. 975, the Bankruptcy Abuse Prevention and Consumer Protection Act of 2003, as well as the 2004 Budget Resolution.

Earlier this week, the Subcommittee on Crime of the Committee on the Judiciary marked up H.R. 1104, the Child Abduction Prevention Act. Nearly identical legislation passed the House last Congress with close to 400 "yea" votes. Chairman SENSENBRENNER has announced that the Committee on the Judiciary will report the bill out from a markup on Tuesday.

This important legislation would codify a current judicial program to implement a nationwide Amber Alert System. In addition, this bill elimi-

nates the statute of limitations for child abduction and sex crimes, prohibits pretrial release in cases of rape or child kidnapping, provides for mandatory minimum sentencing for child kidnapping, and establishes a "two strikes and you're out" for child sex offenders.

We hope to work with the minority to find a way to bring this important legislation to the floor next Wednesday, realizing that the House rules require a 2-day layover, after committee markup, to allow the minority to express their dissenting and minority views on legislation. But I hope we can work together in expediting this very important legislation to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me, and I am happy to answer any questions.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I thank the gentleman for the information he has provided us, and I will have a number of questions.

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

Mr. HOYER. I yield to the gentleman from Utah who would like to address the Amber Alert System and events that have occurred in his district.

Mr. MATHESON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the minority whip.

Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that we saw the benefits of an Amber Alert-like program yesterday in the State of Utah. We had a wonderful event occur, and it occurred because information got out to the public.

What concerns me, Mr. Speaker, is that the Senate has already passed national Amber Alert legislation unanimously. It has been in the House for 2 months now, about; and I would submit that the legislation referred to that is going to be in the Committee on the Judiciary contains a number of other provisions which are worthy of consideration, but I would suggest it might be worthwhile for us to take a look at the Frost-Dunn bill, the straight Amber Alert bill passed through the United States Senate. We could take it up on a unanimous consent request right now and get it on the President's desk right away.

Every day we delay is a day when another abducted child may have less access to an Amber Alert System that gets the information out to people. We learned a lesson in Salt Lake City. We are very proud of the miracle that occurred yesterday. Mr. Smart, in his time of triumph, still is emphasizing the need for Congress to move forward on this, and I would suggest that that is something this body ought to consider.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I thank the gentleman for his comments.

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

Mr. HOYER. I yield to the gentleman from Texas, the ranking member of the Committee on Rules.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. As the gen-

tleman knows, the Amber bill, the Amber Alert plan, was named after a little girl, Amber Hagerman, who was abducted and murdered in my district in Texas, in Arlington, Texas; and the Senate, as previously mentioned, has passed this as a stand-alone bill, unani- mously, and has sent it to the House.

I would ask my friend, the distinguished majority leader, what is the objection to bringing the Amber bill as a stand-alone matter, that has already been passed by the Senate, to the House either under unanimous consent or under suspension of the rules?

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

Mr. HOYER. I will be glad to yield to the majority leader.

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman's question, and I might point out that the gentleman, as well as many other Members around here, are always calling for regular order and we are expediting regular order.

The bill that the gentleman refers to is a bill that has just been marked up this week, even before, thank goodness, Mr. Smart's daughter was returned to him, and was on its way to full committee to be marked up later on next week. Because of the situation, the chairman of the Committee on the Judiciary feels very strongly that they can expedite the matter, actually hold an unusual markup before Members return, and hopefully have this bill on the floor on Wednesday.

There are a lot of provisions in this bill that help. And I might also point out to the gentleman that the Justice Department is running an Amber Alert System in 38 States. They are up and going. There are over 80 systems, Amber Alerts, operating as we speak. So it is not a situation where there will not be coverage of Amber Alerts out there. But I think this legislation is important to get at these criminals that are kidnapping these children, to help the police departments find them quicker and easier and be able to put them away, away from our children, along with codifying what the Justice Department is already doing.

Mr. FROST. If the gentleman from Maryland will continue to yield, my friend, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY), understands that by putting the Amber Alert legislation into a larger omnibus bill, this delays for a very substantial period of time the passage of the Amber Alert bill. There are a number of controversial provisions that have been added to it by the Committee on the Judiciary, provisions that were passed last year and were found unacceptable by the Senate.

I would repeat my question: What is the objection simply to bringing the Amber Alert bill itself as a stand-alone matter that has already been passed by the Senate? What is the objection to bringing that to the floor of the House?

Mr. HOYER. Reclaiming my time, Mr. Speaker, and before the majority leader answers that question, I would

say to him that I have had consultation with the Democratic minority leader; and the Democratic leader and myself, I would say on behalf of our side of the aisle, we would agree to a unanimous consent request today to bring the Senate bill, which as I understand is Senate Bill 121, which essentially is the base bill.

I, frankly, do not interpose objections to that which the gentleman has outlined in his statement will be added to the bill. I do not necessarily find any one of those individual items objectionable; and as I understand, in the committee they were not particularly controversial. But we obviously could accelerate that.

The gentleman is correct. We do want to go by regular order. Regular order is obviously seeking from both sides a unanimous consent to take some action, and I say to the gentleman that consistent with what the gentleman from Texas (Mr. FROST) has said, this side of the aisle would be prepared to give a unanimous consent agreement to passing that bill before we go home today.

Mr. DELAY. Well, if the gentleman will continue to yield, I am not sure I remember the question of the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I would repeat my question, if I may.

Mr. HOYER. I yield to the gentleman for that purpose.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, my question is, What is the objection on the majority side to bringing the stand-alone Amber bill to the floor which has already been passed by the Senate, to bring it to the floor as a separate item and not part of a larger bill?

Mr. DELAY. I appreciate the gentleman's continuing to yield; and, Mr. Speaker, let me just say that I do not agree with the assessment of the gentleman from Texas as to how slow this process can be. And if we honor what this House has already expressed itself on, I remind the gentleman that this bill that he is talking about that got so bogged down, passed this House with over 400 votes and went to the other body where the other body killed it in the last Congress.

So this House has expressed itself that it thinks it is important not only to codify the Amber Alert System that is being run by the Judiciary Department but also to eliminate the statute of limitations for child abduction and sex crimes, to prevent pretrial release in cases of rape or child kidnapping, to provide for a mandatory minimum sentence for child kidnapping, and we also would like to see a "two strikes and you're out" requirement for child sex offenders. I think all of these issues are vitally important when it comes to dealing with children that are being kidnapped in this country.

□ 1530

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time.

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

Mr. HOYER. I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY) did not see the press conference earlier today carried on CNN, I would advise the gentleman that the senior Republican Senator from Texas, Senator KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON, who was a cosponsor of the Amber bill in the Senate, urged that the House take up the Senate passed Amber bill as a clean bill with a separate vote.

Mr. Speaker, I would inquire, did the gentleman see Senator HUTCHISON's statement?

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time.

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

Mr. HOYER. I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. DELAY. I did not see the press conference, but I just ask the question, what did she do to pass the bill out of the Senate in the last Congress?

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

Mr. HOYER. I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, she introduced the Amber Plan in this Congress and had it passed unanimously 92-0, she and Senator DIANNE FEINSTEIN. That is all we are asking, that there be a separate stand-alone vote on the Amber bill in the House, just as there was in the Senate, so it can be sent to the President and signed into law.

If the gentleman would indulge me further, I would like to very briefly read part of a letter that I received today from a city Councilman in my district, Councilman Joe Bruner from the City of Arlington, Texas.

Dear CONGRESSMAN FROST: I understand you have sponsored a bill which will take Arlington's own Amber Plan nationwide. In this day of turmoil and terror, I cannot think of any other means which would better cause the minds of moms and dads to return to normalcy. Doreen and I have always had a special place in our heart for little Amber and defy anyone to ever hinder the implementation of the Amber Plan. As councilman for the district here in Arlington where her body was found, I take exception to Congressman SENSENBRENNER's refusal to let your bill go through.

Then the letter continues.

This really speaks to the fact that the gentleman from Wisconsin (Chairman SENSENBRENNER) and the majority leader insists that the Amber Plan be combined with a larger piece of legislation that has had difficulty in the Senate.

I strongly urge my friend on the other side of the aisle, who has demonstrated an interest in children's issues, to persuade the chairman of the Committee on the Judiciary to permit this bill to go forward.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time.

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

Mr. HOYER. I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. DELAY. I appreciate the gentleman's concern. I have the same concern the gentleman has. I have convinced the chairman to accelerate the process. We are going to have this bill on the floor. With the cooperation of the minority, we will have this bill on the floor next week.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his comments.

At some point in time perhaps we can discuss further the regular order. I observe only that it is my understanding there is a bill coming over from the Senate that will not be referred to committee, will not be subject to amendment, will be taken up and passed as the Senate passed it, and it is my understanding that will be done because of the view of the majority how important it is to pass that bill immediately. That is the partial birth abortion bill.

Am I correct that is the procedure which the majority intends to follow?

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

Mr. HOYER. I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I doubt that. I have not had an opportunity to see that the Senate has even passed the partial birth abortion bill yet. If they have, we will take a look at it. The last I checked, there was an amendment put on the bill that would cause it to go to conference under regular order.

Mr. HOYER. It has not passed the House yet. It is coming from the Senate, and obviously there may be amendments on it. It is our understanding that will be taken in effect from the desk as the Senate bill, voted on, and sent to the President.

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will continue to yield, actually the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER) intended to mark up a partial birth abortion bill next week, but under the circumstances he wanted to accelerate the Amber alert bill and take it up earlier, and so he is putting off the markup on the partial birth abortion bill that we would bring to the floor, and then hopefully go to conference with the Senate under regular order.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I thank the gentleman for that comment.

The gentleman indicated that next week we will be taking up the budget. Can the gentleman tell me whether or not all substitutes that are requested from the Congressional Black Caucus, from the Progressive Caucus, from the Blue Dogs and from the Democrats on the Committee on the Budget will be made in order? I see the distinguished chairman of the Committee on Rules is standing.

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

Mr. HOYER. I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I know the chairman of the Committee on Rules is a very fair man and the Committee on

Rules tries to be as fair as they can. I would presume that the committee will be inclined to follow historic practice for the consideration of the budget next week.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I respectfully inform the majority leader, we were very concerned about the fact that we were shut down today in terms of offering amendments or substitutes. I will respectfully advise the majority that if that continues to occur, there will be actions on our side of the aisle to try to express our deep concern about that.

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

Mr. HOYER. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I simply will say as the distinguished majority leader has said, I actually made the announcement just a few minutes ago about the request that we have proposals submitted to the Committee on Rules by early next week so we will be able to consider this measure on Wednesday. It is our intention, as has been our intention in the past, to do everything we possibly can to make substitutes in order and as many substitutes as we possibly can.

I want to assure the gentleman that is the goal of the Committee on Rules, and we will look forward to testimony from our many colleagues who would like to offer proposals.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I thank the gentleman and express the fervent hope that the committee will be able to reach its goals. They are commendable goals to achieve, and I hope they are achieved.

Mr. Speaker, we have been talking about the Amber bill and adding things to it. We had a bill a week and a half ago on the floor. That was to aid our men and women in the armed forces whom we are sending in harm's way. We were not able to pass it the week before. We have not passed it this week. Can the gentleman advise us as to the status of that bill.

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

Mr. HOYER. I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, the Committee on Ways and Means held a markup of the Social Security bill yesterday, and I expect to consider that legislation under a rule in the next week or so.

On the Armed Services Tax Fairness Act, the committee is still reviewing options for potential changes to that bill, but we also expect to consider that legislation in the very near future.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I advise the distinguished majority leader that I am authorized on behalf of the minority to tell the gentleman that if that bill were reported out without any additional items attached to it, we would be prepared to give unanimous consent so it could be passed either next Tuesday night or Wednesday.

Mr. Speaker, lastly, it is my understanding that we obviously want to accommodate those who want to go to that dinner, but am I correct in observing that the normal practice on Tuesdays will continue to be 6:30?

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

Mr. HOYER. I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman is correct. This is a special and rare occurrence where we would not be starting votes on legislation at 6:30 on a day that we come back into session. There are extenuating circumstances, and we are trying to accommodate our Members. Yes, we hope to stick to 6:30 as much as possible.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I thank the gentleman for his comments.

ADJOURNMENT TO MONDAY, MARCH 17, 2003

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at noon on Monday, March 17, 2003.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

HOUR OF MEETING ON TUESDAY, MARCH 18, 2003

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns on Monday, March 17, that it adjourn to meet at 12:30 p.m. on Tuesday, March 18, 2003, for morning hour debates.

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

There was no objection.

DISPENSING WITH CALENDAR WEDNESDAY BUSINESS ON WEDNESDAY NEXT

Mr. DELAY. 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 Texas?

There was no objection.

HONORING KATHLEEN CASEY AND ALL IRISH AMERICANS ON ST. PATRICK'S DAY

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

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Madam Speaker, with St. Patrick's Day only a few days away, it is appropriate for us to recognize and, yes, celebrate the role that Irish Americans have played in our history and in the development of our national character.

So many Irish Americans came here seeking refuge from tyranny and hunger in their own homeland. They never forgot that suffering that they left behind, which helped ensure that America has, over the years, sided with the oppressed and cared for the less fortunate.

Irish Americans passed on these values, along with a sense of decency and a commitment to justice, as well as a love of song and humor, from generation to generation. One of those proud Americans of Irish descent is Kathleen Casey of Orange County, California, who turns 80 years old today. We wish her a happy birthday, and will join her and other Irish Americans in the celebration of St. Patrick's Day this coming Monday.

NO STRATEGIC PETROLEUM RESERVES TO BE RELEASED

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Madam Speaker, I urge Members to read the Wall Street Journal today wherein the Secretary of Energy, appointed by President Bush, assured Ali Naimi, the Saudi Minister, the man in charge of manipulating oil supply and heading up their negotiations with the cartel to control prices and to constrain supply, he assured him, Mr. Abraham, the Secretary of Energy, assured him the United States would not release oil from its Strategic Petroleum Reserve to help control the prices being gouged out of Americans by the Saudis and others.

That is outrageous. I cannot believe that the Secretary of Energy appointed by President Bush has cut a deal with the Saudis that we will not release our Strategic Petroleum Reserve to help the American consumers, to help keep our airlines from going bankrupt, to help keep our truckers from going bankrupt, and to help keep American families not being able to put food on the table so they can buy a tank of gas for their car. There is something wrong with that. I have sent the Secretary of Energy a letter to ask him to explain his position to the American people.

EXPRESSING REGRET FOR ASSASSINATION OF SERBIAN PRIME MINISTER ZORAN DJINDJIC

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

Mr. DREIER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to express my deep regret at the tragic assassination yesterday of Serbian Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic. Prime Minister Djindjic worked closely with my friend, Jim Denton, and my chief of staff, Brad Smith, in pursuing democratization in Serbia. In a country that has seen more than its share of autocratic governments, the Prime Minister promoted democratic ideals