

ANNOUNCEMENT BY COMMITTEE ON RULES REGARDING AMENDMENTS TO H.R. 1527, NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2003

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

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, the Committee on Rules may meet the week of May 12 to grant a rule for the consideration of H.R. 1527, the National Transportation Safety Board Reauthorization Act of 2003, which may require that amendments be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD prior to their consideration on the floor. The Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure ordered the bill reported on April 9, 2003, and filed its report in the House on May 1, 2003.

Members should draft their amendments to the text of the bill as reported by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. Members should use the Office of Legislative Counsel to ensure that their amendments are drafted in the most appropriate format. Members are also advised to check with the Office of the Parliamentarian to be certain their amendments comply with the rules of the House.

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LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

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

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the distinguished majority leader for the purpose of inquiring about the schedule for the following week.

Mr. DELAY. I appreciate the gentleman yielding.

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. A final list of those bills will be sent to Members' offices by the end of this week. Any votes called on these measures will be rolled until 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday.

On Wednesday, we expect to consider additional bills under suspension of the rules, as well as H.R. 1000, the Pension Security Act of 2003.

On Thursday, we plan to take up H.R. 1527, the National Transportation Safety Board reauthorization.

Finally, I would like to note for all Members that we are making a change to the schedule that we sent to all the offices at the beginning of the year. We do not plan to have votes next Friday, May 16.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the majority leader for giving us that information. I know Members are pleased to hear about Friday, the 16th.

Mr. Leader, the pension bill to which you referred, will this bill that is brought to the floor be a product of the Committee on Education and the

Workforce or will it be a joint product of the Committee on Ways and Means and that committee?

Mr. DELAY. If the gentleman will yield further, it is my understanding that the pension bill will be a joint product from the Committee on Ways and Means and the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Leader, as you know, there was great consternation and concern on our side of the aisle about how this massive tax bill was considered today, not only in terms of the fact that we did not get to offer a substitute but also in terms of the very abbreviated time that such a major piece, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ENGLISH) referred to it as the most important bill that we might consider during this session of the Congress, was given 1 hour of general debate.

Given that, can you give any assurances that when the pension bill comes to the floor that we will be given an opportunity to offer a substitute and that sufficient time to discuss such a major piece of legislation will be allotted?

I yield to my friend.

Mr. DELAY. I appreciate my friend yielding. Obviously we will work with you to do whatever we can to allow the minority side to have a substitute that is germane to the bill. We think it is important that you be allowed to debate these issues and have an alternative if you choose to offer one. The gentleman is correct, the pension bill is a very important bill and should have enough time to be fully discussed by this House.

Mr. HOYER. Reclaiming my time, I appreciate the gentleman's observation that he would like to work with us in trying to get there.

What impediments would you see to us having a substitute to the pension bill that is offered?

Mr. DELAY. If the gentleman will continue to yield, I am not advised nor do I contemplate any impediment whatsoever, particularly on a pension bill. As the gentleman knows, on a bill that comes from the Committee on Ways and Means, particularly when it deals with the Tax Code, it is always and has always been a closely held bill because any amendment or any substitute has long-ranging implications and consequences. And so the Ways and Means bills have always been held. In the case of a pension bill, it is pretty straightforward. If the minority has a substitute that is germane to the bill, certainly we will give it every consideration.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Leader, there has been a lot of discussion about the partial-birth abortion bill. It is not on the schedule for next week, as I understand it. Do you have any idea when this might come up? In particular, do you expect it to come up before the Memorial Day break? I yield to my friend.

Mr. DELAY. I thank the gentleman for yielding. As the distinguished mi-

nority whip is probably aware, the Senate passed this very important legislation before the Easter break. The Committee on the Judiciary has marked up the bill. But the calendar being as full as it is before the Memorial Day break, I really cannot see where we can get it to the floor before early summer, sometime probably in June.

Mr. HOYER. With respect to Medicare prescription drugs, Mr. Leader, we are hearing that this bill may be coming to the floor very soon. Can you tell us when we might expect this bill on the floor and again will that be on the floor before the Memorial Day recess?

Mr. DELAY. If the gentleman will yield further, now that the budget resolution has been adopted and we have set aside funds for modernizing the Medicare program and add a prescription drug benefit, the Committee on Ways and Means and the Committee on Energy and Commerce are working very hard to craft a legislative proposal. As the gentleman is very aware and everyone in this House is aware, this is a very difficult issue and it takes a long time to bring parties together. We hope to consider this legislation in the coming weeks, but we really do not have a feel right now as to when we can bring it up. It is difficult to say whether we can have it before the Memorial Day break or not.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for that information.

There is another bill which I understand is pretty controversial but which is being worked on. I do not know whether the leader might inform us as to when we might expect to see this bill, and that is the forest management bill. Could you give us some information on where that bill stands at this point in time?

Mr. DELAY. If the gentleman will yield further, the healthy forest bill that we anticipated to be on this floor next week, and we are still working hard to do that, ran into a little problem of jurisdiction. The Committee on the Judiciary has yet to mark that bill up, or their portion of the bill up. They hope to do that next week. If everyone would cooperate, we could mark it up and get it to the floor by the end of next week. If not, then we have every intention of scheduling that bill in the following week.

Mr. HOYER. So in any event, your expectation would be we would pass, or consider it, by the Memorial Day break?

Mr. DELAY. If the gentleman will yield further, I would hope so, yes.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Leader, I take it there are no other items for next week other than those which we have referenced?

Mr. DELAY. The gentleman is correct.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the leader for the information.