

## THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the unfinished business is the question on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal which the Chair will put de novo.

The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

## GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 2881.

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

There was no objection.

## FAA REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2007

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 664 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 2881.

□ 1134

## IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 2881) to amend title 49, United States Code, to authorize appropriations for the Federal Aviation Administration for fiscal years 2008 through 2011, to improve aviation safety and capacity, to provide stable funding for the national aviation system, and for other purposes, with Ms. DEGETTE in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

The gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Madam Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Chairman, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure brings to the House today an historic bill to address the needs of aviation today and into the future. At a time when we are seeing aviation recover from the devastating aftereffects of September 11, the flood of bankruptcies that occurred in the years subsequent to that tragic assault on America, and the retiring of aircraft, laying off of tens of thousands, even hundreds of thousands of airline workers and workers in related fields, we are now seeing aviation return to and exceed all-time previously registered highs.

Last year, over a billion people traveled by air worldwide, and 750 million of that travel was in the U.S. air space. We are seeing increasing delays. Only 72 percent of flights arrived on time in this last year. That indicates congestion in the air space and congestion on the ground and congestion in our air traffic control system.

We bring to the House, we bring to the country, historic funding levels of \$68 billion over the next 4 years. We bring you a 4-year bill, not 3 years like we have done in years past, to address the needs of creating capacity on the air side of airports: \$15.8 billion for the airport improvement program; \$13 billion to invest in the air traffic control technology and making room for and accelerating the development of the Next Generation air traffic control technology; and \$37.2 billion to fund the operations of the FAA, essentially paying air traffic controllers and those who maintain the system.

These are all-time high investments. I have served in the House for 33 years. I have been deeply engaged in aviation for over 25 years of those years, and I have never seen this kind of investment that Congress has made, this deeply, this extensively, and so far out into the future.

I want to thank the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. COSTELLO), the chairman of our Subcommittee on Aviation who has seized the issue, mastered the subject matter, conducted extensive in-depth hearings on a broad range of issues considered by the committee, and has played a critical role in shaping the bill.

I want to express my appreciation to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA), the ranking member of the full committee, who has served previously as the Chair of the Aviation Subcommittee and is fully engaged in the issues of aviation and who committed himself every step of the way to the shaping of this legislation, including working together with us on the Democratic side, with the DOT and the White House and the air traffic controllers in an attempt to resolve a very knotty problem of the air traffic controllers' contract.

And I also express appreciation to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. PETRI), the ranking member on the Aviation Subcommittee, for the enormous amount of time he devoted and for his always thoughtful and intellectual contributions to the work of the committee.

Madam Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MICA. Madam Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Chairman, I am pleased to be here this morning to bring to the floor the FAA reauthorization legislation that is before us. As Members know, and those who follow this subject, our authorization runs out, I believe, the end of next week. That is our Federal policy and projects' financing ability to run our Nation's air traffic system.

We had a responsibility to move forward legislation to renew that Federal law, and that's why we are here today. I think that is an important responsibility.

I have tried to work with Mr. OBERSTAR, who now chairs the full committee. He chaired the Aviation Subcommittee, ironically, when I was a freshman in Congress. And as he mentioned, I had the opportunity to chair that subcommittee for the past 6 years and developed a great working relationship with him.

I am pleased to work with my ranking member, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. PETRI), who has done yeoman's work to try to bring this legislation forward in a responsible manner, working with the now-chairman of the subcommittee, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. COSTELLO), who likewise has put his full efforts towards this important reauthorization.

We have been fortunate, too, to have great staff on both sides of the aisle working together to meet that responsibility. I am pleased that we could bring the bill forward.

However, I have to say, in all honesty, I have some mixed emotions. I must also state that when we come to final passage, and I have told Mr. OBERSTAR and Mr. COSTELLO and others, that I will cast a vote not in support of this FAA reauthorization, and really for two reasons.

First of all, when we introduced the bill, there were several objectionable provisions that had been proposed that I opposed, and I do respect the gentlemen from Minnesota and also Illinois, in working cooperatively to introduce the bill without those objectionable provisions. However, right after we introduced it and we marked up the bill, we started sort of piling on, and there are two provisions which I cannot support, two major provisions, and I made them aware of my opposition.

The first one involves an unprecedented reach-back, and it is for the air traffic controllers. Let me say there are men and women, some 15,000 of them, who do an incredible job serving our air traffic control system. And back in the 1990s, I believe that they were underpaid, undercompensated for their responsibilities. But through a contract that was negotiated then under the Clinton administration, they did receive for the next 7 years an average increase of about 10 percent a year. In fact, it totals 75 percent over those 7 years.

Now, I would love to have it 10 percent guaranteed increase. I think people who work here in the Congress would like to have a 10 percent pay increase every year; 1.2 million Federal employees, maybe another 20,000 that work at FAA would all like to have this deal, and that deal wasn't to be.

This past Congress had the difficult task of receiving the contract that was being negotiated and the final offer that was made by FAA because the contract reached an impasse. And in an