

THE DAILY WHIP

Thursday, March 20, 2003 | Floor News from Democratic Whip Steny Hoyer

HOUSE MEETS AT...	LAST VOTE PREDICTED...
10:00 a.m.: Legislative Business	Late Evening
Number of "One-Minutes" Today: 5 per side	

***** ATTENDANCE IS CRITICAL FOR TODAY'S CONSIDERATION OF THE HOUSE BUDGET RESOLUTION. PLEASE NOTIFY THE DEMOCRATIC WHIP'S FLOOR STAFF IF YOU PLAN TO BE ABSENT.**

***** NOTE THAT THE REPUBLICAN LEADERSHIP HAS INDICATED THAT VOTES ARE NOW POSSIBLE ON FRIDAY.**

FLOOR SCHEDULE AND PROCEDURE

There will be 3 votes at approximately 10:15 a.m. (one journal vote, and the two suspension votes rolled from yesterday).

Rolled Suspension Votes (2 bills):

- 1) **H.R. 1307** - Armed Forces Tax Fairness Act of 2003 (Thomas - W&M)
- 2) **H.Res. 132** - Resolution stating that the Pledge of Allegiance should be upheld (Ose - Judiciary)

H.Con. Res. 95 - Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for FY2004 (Subject to a Rule)

H.R. 1104 - Child Abduction Prevention Act (Sensenbrenner-Judiciary) (Subject to a Unanimous Consent Agreement).

BILL SUMMARY AND KEY ISSUES

H.Con. Res. 95 - Concurrent Resolution on the Budget (Subject to a Rule).

The irresponsible Republican Budget Resolution sacrifices important priorities to pay for their continuing mismanagement of our nation's economy. The Rules Committee amended the budget resolution reported by the Budget Committee last Thursday and continues to require \$265 billion in mandatory spending cuts over the next ten years, including approximately \$100 billion to Medicaid and \$15 billion to Veterans. The amended Republican Budget now gets to balance by 2012.

- **Republicans find funds for tax-cuts but not for key priorities.** Ignoring current economic problems, the Republican Budget still incorporates \$1.3 trillion in additional tax cuts and calls for making the 2001 tax cuts permanent.
- **Republicans short-change important priorities.** The Republican Budget places additional burdens on cash-strapped states and fails to adequately fund core functions of the government including education and homeland security. Republicans only partially fund programs under the No Child Left Behind Act, and reduce investments on highways, farm and non-defense programs.

The Rules Committee has recommended a structured rule that provides two hours of general debate; one hour for Humphrey-Hawkins Debate; and waives all points of order against consideration of the concurrent resolution. The Rule makes in order four amendments in the nature of a substitute in the following order:

- **Hill/Moore/Stenholm/Tanner (Blue Dog Coalition) - Amendment in the nature of a Substitute (1 hour).** This substitute would balance the unified budget by 2009 and the on-budget balance (non-Social Security) by 2013. It assumes the President's spending levels, including \$400 billion for a prescription drug benefit under Medicare, and achieves \$2 trillion less debt than the President's plan over the next ten years. This substitute defers tax cuts for the top two brackets until the costs of the war are paid off and the budget is put back on a path towards balance; immediately repeals the marriage penalty; and makes estate tax relief immediate and permanent.

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- **Toomey (Republican Study Committee) – Amendment in the nature of a Substitute (1 hour).** This substitute calls for more tax cuts and less discretionary spending than provided in the reported budget resolution which would produce a balanced budget by 2007.
- **Owens/Cummings/Kucinich/Lee (CBC/Progressive Caucus) – Amendment in the nature of a Substitute (1 hour).** This substitute freezes the tax cut in a spirit of sacrifice at a time of crisis in the nation, thus generating greater revenue; supports a level of funding for defense commensurate with the request of the President; provides for more than \$300 billion dollars for an immediate economic stimulus; provides for \$528 billion for a Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit, most of which will be funded after year 2004; and restores vital cuts in education and increases the education budget by \$20 billion to guarantee that the nation will continue to develop and maintain an educated populace as it's most important weapon in the fight against fanatic terrorism.
- **Spratt Democratic Budget Alternative – Amendment in the nature of a Substitute (1 hour).**
 - **The Spratt Democratic Budget Alternative balances the budget by 2010;**
 - **Offers real economic stimulus and job creation** by including the \$136 billion stimulus package released in January. Through individual payroll rebates and business investment incentives, the Spratt Democratic Alternative would help all taxpayers and create 1 million new jobs;
 - **Proposes responsible tax policy** by continuing the implementation of middle income tax cuts as directed by the 2001 tax bill, including the elimination of the marriage penalty and increased child tax credit; and would freeze tax cuts for the top two income tax brackets (individual taxpayers with incomes above \$151,300);
 - **Meets our nation's domestic needs** by providing over \$200 billion more in domestic investments than the Nussle-Republican budget. The Spratt Democratic Alternative funds priority investments such as NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND, EDUCATION FOR THE DISABLED, VETERANS' BENEFITS, CHILDREN'S SERVICES, PUBLIC HEALTH, TRANSPORTATION, ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS, and AGRICULTURE programs;
 - **Invests in Health Care and a Strong Prescription Drug Plan** by providing at least \$20 billion to cover the uninsured and at least \$528 billion for a real Prescription Drug Program under the trusted Medicare program without forcing seniors to leave their doctors to get the medicine that they need;
 - **Invests in Homeland Security and Defense Funding** by increasing the resources for Homeland Defense and First Responders and targets \$20 billion over the Nussle-Republican budget to First Responders. The Democratic Budget alternative also matches the President's budget dollar for dollar on defense funding over the next five years.

All Democrats are strongly urged to VOTE YES on the SPRATT DEMOCRATIC ALTERNATIVE.

H.R. 1104 - Child Abduction Prevention Act (Sensenbrenner - Judiciary) (Subject to a Unanimous Consent Agreement). This bill provides for the appointment of a national America's Missing: Broadcast Emergency Response (AMBER) alert network coordinator within the Justice Department and a grant program to help support the AMBER system. In addition, the bill includes a number of other provisions to increase penalties for crimes against children and for sex offenses. Democrats will continue to insist that Republicans agree to the immediate consideration of the Senate-passed AMBER legislation adopted on January 21st (S. 121).

DAILY QUOTE...

"It is unconscionable to cut benefits and services for disabled veterans at a time when we have thousands of our service members in harm's way fighting terrorism around the world and when we are sending thousands more of our sons and daughters to fight a war in Iraq."

- Edward R. Heath, Sr., National Commander of the Disabled American Veterans

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