

ARMS Email System
RECORD TYPE: FEDERAL (TRP NOTES MAIL)

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[UNKNOWN])

CREATION DATE/TIME:13-AUG-1998 18:46:26.00

SUBJECT: Ag Perspectives

TEXT:

WORLD PERSPECTIVES, INC.

DETERMINED TO BE AN ADMINISTRATIVE

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MARKING INITIALS: JK **DATE:** 1-29-20
2019-0155 - F

Ag Perspectives Thursday, August 13, 1998 1800EDT

TOPIC	SUMMARY
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WEATHER: 1. US: Abundant Rain in the Southeast.

2. WORLD: The World Watches China.

MARKETS: 3. CLOSING FUTURES PRICES.

4. COMMENTARY: Sell the Rally.

5. EUROPE: Message Delivered Again; China Sales.

Analysis: 6. Russian Agriculture Faces Double Whammy.

POLICY: 7. Flour EEP Revisited.

8. Bombings Not a Factor to Africa Trade Bill.

CALENDAR: 9. Tomorrow.

WEATHER

1. US: ABUNDANT RAIN IN THE SOUTHEAST: Angela Smith

Nearly ideal summer crop weather is expected to continue in the Midwest and the Central Plains for the next few days. Warmer temps this weekend will speed drying rates, but subsoil moisture will be adequate enough to support normal development. Rain will continue in northern Texas and Oklahoma for the next few days, but the damage already done to crops in the region cannot be reversed. Abundant rain is expected in the Southeast from Alabama to the Carolinas for the next several days, and flash flooding is possible in some areas. This rain will be watched carefully by cotton producers in the region, since cotton bolls are starting to open and heavy rain could lower the quality of the most mature plants. A few showers are likely in the northern Delta over the next few days. The rain won't be excessive, but many fields in Mississippi, Tennessee and eastern Arkansas will stay very wet. Drier weather is needed across the region, especially in cotton-growing areas. Dry weather in the Northern Plains this week has further reduced soil moisture levels across the region. Hot temps in eastern Montana and western N.Dakota continues to stress immature coarse grain and oilseed crops. However, the dry weather has allowed spring wheat harvesting to increase.

2. WORLD: THE WORLD WATCHES CHINA: Angela Smith

Recent hot, dry weather in EUROPE has had little impact on crops so far, with high yields and good quality expected in most areas. But late

reproducing and filling summer crops could end up with lower yield potentials and quality if significant rain doesn't fall soon. Cooler weather is expected in northern areas this weekend, while showers in southern FRANCE, northern ITALY, and SPAIN will benefit corn, soybeans, and sorghum. Northern INDIA's peanut and soybean areas have received timely rain, but both the far northern and the extreme southern parts of the country are still drier than usual. A slow-moving storm in northeastern CHINA is likely to bring substantial rain to a region that is already saturated. CANADA has an increased chance for rain this weekend, but until then net drying will continue to stress late season crops.

MARKETS

3. CLOSING FUTURES PRICES:

WU	253 1/2	- 5 3/4	CKU	206 3/4	- 2 1/2
WZ	271 1/2	- 4 1/4	CNZ	216 1/2	- 2 1/4
KCU	277 1/4	- 4	SQB	558 1/2	- 1
KCZ	292	- 3 3/4	SXB	530	- 2 1/2
MPU	327 1/4	- 4 1/4	SMQ	137.9	- 0.5
MPZ	333 1/4	- 3	BOQ	23.44	+ 0.18

4. COMMENTARY: SELL THE RALLY: Bob Kohlmeyer

Yesterday's late-session price jump may have come along too late for the bears to react very much, but today they were ready. When the markets rallied again early (and modestly) on good weekly export inspection data, there were plenty of sellers waiting to attack. The result was that the

rally lasted only a few minutes before prices were pushed below yesterday's closes. Wheat suffered the worst after having gained the most yesterday, closing down 3 to almost 6 cts bu. Corn lost 2 cts or more, and soybeans generally lost the same.

Funds were credited with selling about 15-18 mln beans. A lot of that selling was concentrated in the Sept which closed out of line as a result, down 4 3/4 cts. Soy oil was the only positive market. It closed up about 18 points on a strong cash oil market in S. America and rumors of new Chinese purchases.

In the case of the corn and soybean markets, the "big crop" syndrome is at work again. It is a market truism that "big crops get bigger," so in the wake of the USDA Aug 1 production estimates, market psychology has turned toward a 10 bln bu corn production number and a 3 bln bu bean crop. Not that anyone would on Aug 13 predict these as final numbers, but this is the direction we are headed, or so goes popular belief.

5. EUROPE: MESSAGE DELIVERED AGAIN; CHINA SALES: Bob Kohlmeyer

EU exporters bid for about 665,000 mt of wheat restitution at today's tender in Brussels. Though that is a goodly quantity, it is not the largest volume bid for recently. More impressive than the volume were the levels of the bids. They ranged from a low of 30.92 to a high of 35.99 ECUs, with the bulk of the volume concentrated at 33.50 and below. Given current market factors, we see this as more aggressive bidding by exporters than at perhaps any time this marketing year so far.

This array of bids gave the Commission the opportunity to mold its response into any message it cared to deliver. What it chose to do was to accept 231,000 mt of wheat restitution at up to 32.55 ECUs. This PM that restitution translates into a dlr FOB replacement value of about 95.00 dlrs mt for Aug or Sept. Oct/Nov works out to about 101.00, and Nov/Dec figures about 104.00 dlrs mt. On balance those values represent another up-tick for export wheat prices.

Two things strike us about today's results. First, the fact that so much was bid for at the values accepted by Brussels suggests that sellers of the recent sales to private Moroccan buyers had no interest in staying short restitutions. Even though shipments are very prompt, position shuffling could have allowed some, if not all of the sellers to stay short.

Second, Brussels cut the level off at 32.55 even though they could have increased the volume by well more than 100,000 mt by going to 33.00, but they chose not to. At 33.50 they could have doubled the quantity accepted. They certainly could have rationalized without much of a stretch a 33.00 acceptance in terms of US market values. But they chose not to. Once again, the Commission has crafted a message to all concerned that their conservatism applies both to price and to volume. And once again they have kept the French wheat price tightly locked on to the value of US SRW. The EU trade probably did not expect much different, but it certainly hoped for more flexibility from Brussels, as their bids attest.

In the 1st crack at the tender for French intervention wheat, 22,750 mt

were sold at down to 85.25 ECUs. On the straight calculation that the Commission will advertise, this level converts to roughly 101.00 dlrs FOB.

However, there are probably enough transport, quality and other considerations involved, which we call gimmicks, that the real value to the buyer/s is about 5.00-6.00 ECUs less, or in line with the restitution acceptances.

Barley values also seemed to tick upwards slightly on small sale of French intervention barley at 55.95 ECUs. We see that as worth about 65.00 dlrs FOB after subtracting 3.00 dlrs for "gimmicks." All barley restitution bids were rejected.

Following the tender results, there was a wide disparity in paper market bids and offers for French wheat. For example, Nov/Dec was bid at 98.00 dlrs mt, but the offer was firm at 105.00. Interior French wheat edged up again, trading in small amounts at 76.00 francs per 100 kgs.

In a related matter, several trade sources indicate that there has, in fact, been some French wheat sold to China recently. Clients may recall that we speculated about this possibility not long ago (see WPI 7/23). So far, we are led to believe that the quantity is not large, perhaps 50,000-100,000 mt, for Sept shipment. A price of 91.00-92.00 dlrs has been mentioned, but we have no particular confidence in this, though we do have confidence in the reports of a sale or sales.

What do sales of French wheat to China mean to the market? That is very

much a glass half-full or half-empty question. The Chinese imported just over 100,000 mt of wheat during the past 3 months according to estimates. That would certainly be 1 of the lowest if not the lowest total wheat import in any quarterly period since wheat imports began in 1973. If, after such a paltry amount, Chinese buyers were to buy only 100,000 mt of wheat, it is not unreasonable to see the purchase as bearish. If it is a forerunner of much more, it could be a different story, of course.

We should remember that the Chinese are expected to import some wheat in 98/99. USDA has them in for 2.0 mmt as recently as yesterday's new S and D. So with prices low and time marching on, some purchases should not surprise. And with Canada producing a smaller and higher quality crop this year, the CWB's willingness to compete with the current low world price levels is doubtful. The US is out of the picture for TCK quality and risk reasons, so the EU, which is to say French wheat, is about the only real, competitive alternative until the Southern Hemisphere new crop arrives.

Meanwhile, EU traders have to mull over recent events. There is likely still a good-sized paper short position in the market. Those holding the short who have hedged their positions in Chicago wheat futures should be encouraged by today's tender results. The lock between Brussels and US SRW values seems stronger than ever. But, anyone who is simply short French wheat paper flat price (hard though that may be to imagine) might be looking for cover.

ANALYSIS

6. RUSSIAN AGRICULTURE FACES DOUBLE WHAMMY: Taylor Spies

According to recent estimates by the Russian Agriculture Ministry, the drought which has affected 39 of Russia's 89 regions will lower grain production by as much as 17 million metric tons. According to senior agriculture ministry officials, the drought has been widespread, killing crops on 12 million hectares, 22 percent of Russia's total planting area, and damaging crops on another 40 million hectares.

This drastic reduction in Russian grain crops couldn't come at a worse time. With the ruble in a nosedive against the dollar and the German mark, neither the Russian economy nor the Russian government seem to have the wherewithal to deal with the tight grain supply resulting from this drought.

The Agriculture Ministry estimates that the 1998 Russian grain crop could be as small as 62 million metric tons, a considerably smaller crop than last year's 88.5 ton crop and earlier government targets for this year's crop of 70 million tons. Total damage from the drought could total over 1.4 billion dlrs.

Spring wheat was especially hurt by the drought. Sources say that this year's crop could be less than half of last years 4.85 MMT crop at somewhere between 1.7 & 2.2 MMT. However, the quality of this year's crop, especially the hard wheat crop, is expected to be much higher than last year's crop. This abundance of quality wheat should allow Russia to be self sufficient in milling despite the drought.

However, the estimated 60-65 MMT grain crop will not meet all of Russia's annual grain requirements, which total 39.5 MMT of milling wheat and 30.5 MMT of other grains. Furthermore, according to sources in the trade, Russian stocks will be also be much tighter than expected for the 98/99 crop due to an overestimation of last year's stock number by the Russian government. Sources in the Russian grain trade have said that grain stocks for 97/98 could be as much as 8 MMT smaller than the government's 20 MMT estimate. Yet, the Russian government maintains that its carry-in numbers are correct and that has no plans to import grain.

According to Russian government officials, no compensation has been paid to farmers affected by the drought up to this point. While there had been plans to pay out as much as 22.26 million dlrs of drought loss compensation in July, these plans were never implemented. Recently, however the Russian government has announced plans to drastically change the taxes assessed to the imports of both agriculture products and supplies.

According to the Russian Agriculture Ministry, the government plans to raise taxes on a variety of meat, dairy, and poultry products. These products were chosen due to the fact that Russia currently fills over 50 percent of its total domestic consumption in these areas through imports. The agriculture ministry says that this increase in the import tax is a necessary initiative to protect domestic producers. At the same time the government has said that the import tax on products that they can not produce such as farm equipment and soybean meal will be eliminated

altogether.

WPI ANALYSIS: With a major drought affecting farmers throughout Russia and a major financial crisis, the Russian government finds itself in a difficult position. Government officials want to come to the aid of the farmers who have lost significant portions of their crops this year, but the country's financial situation makes any direct payment to farmers extremely difficult. As a result, the agriculture ministry sees this effort to limit the supply of dairy, meat, and poultry exports and reduce the cost of agriculture inputs that can't be produced domestically, as a means of assisting domestic producers without paying money directly out of government coffers.

A major issue surrounding the situation in Russia is the extent to which Russia's poultry imports will be affected. Russia is the largest importer of American poultry and a major market for chicken parts that do not sell well in the United States, e.g. wings, legs, and thighs. A large decline in Russian poultry imports could have a substantial impact on the US poultry market.

The recent decision by the Russian government to raise the import tax on dairy, meat, and poultry does not bode well for US poultry exports to Russia. In addition, to the rising cost of imported products which naturally result from the decline of one currency against another, American poultry imports will also face higher import taxes due to a recent government decision to raise taxes on dairy, meat, and poultry imports.

While the Russian government has spun this as an effort to support farmers, in the midst of a financial crisis and a tight grain supply situation, it is unlikely that Russian farmers will expand livestock production. So the only foreseeable effect of this policy will be higher costs on Russian grocery shelves.

The combination of continued drought conditions and the current financial crisis may not be limited to the 98/99 crop. With winter wheat planting scheduled to begin around the first week of September, the impact of the current situation in Russia could potentially carry into the 99/00 crop year.

The major problem affecting the upcoming planting may not be so much the continuing dry weather, but how to pay for the inputs they need for planting. The economic consequences of the ruble's current nosedive against the dollar and mark will have a major impact on everything from the cost of fuel, fertilizers, and machinery parts to the availability of credit and operating loans.

The recent announcement of the elimination of import taxes on agricultural supplies does not provide much help to farmers for this year's planting. Most of the inputs needed for planting are produced domestically whereas the change in the import tax will effect the cost of farm machinery imports. At a time when farmers will have a hard enough time scraping together enough money to get the crop into the ground, it is hard to imagine that many Russian farmers will be buying new tractors or combines.

If Russia does end up needing to import grain in 98/99, it is likely to involve barter with Germany in exchange for Russian petroleum. With the way that things are shaping up with the Russian grain crops both this year and next year, it could be that in 99/00 Russia becomes a significant wildcard in the world grain market, as the Russian government is forced to import grain to make up for two consecutive years of limited production.

In the meantime, as we've pointed out before, several former Soviet republics, including Russia, could be considered to be a part of the President's 2.5 mmt wheat donation initiative. In this kind of economic environment, it seems very unlikely that donations to Russia would replace commercial business.

In fact, in 1999/2000, Russia quite likely could qualify for Title I of the US PL 480 program if enough funding existed. If U.S. grain stocks stay high we could also see USDA get creative under its reborn CCC/Section 416 mechanism that facilitated this 2.5 mmt donation program. A final option might be to develop a creative GSM program that includes 100 pct coverage for commodity and freight.

It has been nearly 10 years since developments in both China and Russia were watched on a daily basis in the grain futures markets. Therefore it is only a moderate surprise that both countries may be about to re-enter the spotlight in the coming months.

This time around, however, we're using economic terminology to describe

events rather than political even though the term "stability" still applies very directly. This also speaks to how things have both changed and stayed the same in today's world.

POLICY

7. FLOUR EEP REVISITED: Gregg Doud

We went back and looked and it was on July 24th of last year that we last spoke seriously about the administration's efforts to reinstate the Export Enhancement Program for flour. Since that time, US flour and product exports for (June-May) 97/98 were 108,000 mt (163,000 mt in 96/97). The EU exported about 6 mmt of flour in its (July-June) 97/98 marketing year.

The US flour EEP machine seems to rev up anytime Yemen appears to be ready to tender for flour in the international markets. The last time the issue came up was late April when Yemen came in for 450,000 mt of flour.

Today there was a TPSC (Trade Policy Staff Committee or staff level meeting of the TPRG or Trade Policy Review Group) meeting to discuss a 300,000 mt flour EEP initiative for Yemen. It is our understanding that there was no decision made today on the issue at this meeting though this could also mean they deferred the decision to their superiors. There is still support for such an initiative within the administration. New faces within the TPRG and the support of the wheat growers are also supporting this initiative. We don't have a timetable as to when the Clinton administration might announce a program, but we do know that Yemen is

apparently going to be in the market for about 300,000 mt of flour in 2-3 weeks.

The latest twist that is much different from this time last year, however, is that since the beginning of its new marketing year July 1, the EU has awarded ONLY 50,000 mt in flour export licenses. This is a dramatic departure from what had to probably be at least 1-2 mmt of awards at this time last year as the EU had packed most of its export program into the front end of its marketing year. US commercial flour and product export commitments reported today as of last week were 60,300 mt.

The only thing that can even remotely be construed as aggressive on the part of the European's flour export campaign thus far this year is that they increased the standing wheat flour refund from 42 ECU's to 44.5 ECU's today. However, they also issued revised correctives for the third country export of wheat flour in the August-December period that clearly demonstrates a non-aggressive posture:

August : 0.0 ECU's

September : 0.0

October : -5.0

November : -10.0

December : -10.0

WPI ANALYSIS: As we said last year, the EU's export subsidy obligations should again be brought into focus as the next round of trade negotiations kicks off, however, we're not sure a 300,000 mt flour EEP does anything to

promote that effort. The real difference this year, though, is that it is an election year and wheat prices are quite low. This makes the primary objective to do something that looks good to US wheat farmers back in a few Congressmen's home districts. Trade policy barely enters into the discussion.

That is why we think the chances of a targeted 300,000 mt flour EEP to Yemen are much better this year than last, especially after the announcement of the President's 2.5 mmt wheat donation initiative. Obviously, 300,000 mt of flour pales in comparison regardless of precedent. Some might say that the only discussion at this point appears to be the size of the bonus and the timing.

We would calculate the size of any bonus as first being determined by the difference between the price of US SRW and HRW. This is because French wheat values are basically on par with US SRW today. Next, the bonus would have to counteract any costs associated with industrial differences between the production of flour between the US and Europe in turning wheat into flour. Lastly, the US has an ocean freight disadvantage of probably 5 dlrs/mt to Yemen that the bonus would offset.

We could end the discussion here, however, we're going to take this opportunity to point out that the bigger issue here is not a 300,000 mt flour EEP to Yemen, but rather any sign of a recognizable set of trade policy objectives by this administration. Here are just four quick points regarding this subject:

--China WTO accession. It's in a vegetative state by USTR's Barshefsky's own admission.

--Chile's accession into NAFTA. If what this administration says it true that it doesn't need fast track to negotiate trade agreements, then the agreement accepting Chile into the NAFTA should be ready to sign the day after Congress would happen to give President Clinton fast track trade negotiating authority.

--Speaking of fast track, we all know why the administration is opposed to fast track's approval (Gore vs. Gephardt) before the election, but they must also know that any momentum in Congress to approve fast track all but disappears after the election.

--The millenium round of WTO negotiations. The administration's policy is for a sectoral approach and any progress in agriculture will be impossible to do without a bigger package. There appears to be total resistance to any comprehensive negotiations and there is no overall game plan.

One last point regarding an EEP initiative for flour. It appears that after a long standing opposition to flour EEPs based on the presumption that it took away from EEP for wheat, the wheat growers are now promoting EEP for flour. They may now see a flour EEP initiative as something that gets them one step closer to reinstating EEP for wheat. We would still rate the chances of a wheat EEP at zero.

8. BOMBINGS NOT A FACTOR TO AFRICA TRADE BILL--FAST TRACK IS: Dave Juday

One question we've been asking around Capitol Hill the past few days is how the terrorist bombings of the US Embassy in Kenya and Tanzania might affect the Africa trade bill. We foresaw a couple possible scenarios: First, the Africa trade bill could be sped up due to the bombings; that is if policy makers wanted to respond to the anti-American impact the terrorists certainly must have had by forging forth a strong pro-market-based democratic response. Second, the bombings could derail the debate over Africa by devolving into security issues rather than trade, and thus slow its consideration.

It would seem that most of the sources we talked to on Capitol Hill indicate that the consensus thinking about the bombings is that is not an African issue at all, but rather a symptom of a larger global issue of terrorism, and thus a matter of Embassy security. In fact, Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott has cleared the way for a recess appointment for the new nominee to head State Department Security; that nominee was scheduled to be confirmed by the Senate after it reconvened in September. Senate Ag Cmte Chmn Richard Lugar, who is also the former chmn of the Foreign Relations Cmte, has stated that the Senate needs to conduct a debate about embassy security, and Republican leaders have generally given a green light to the President's request for emerging Embassy security funding. House Speaker Newt Gingrich even warned that if terrorists smell weakness in foreign policy resolve because of partisan dissension due to the Independent Counsel investigation of the President, they are mistaken.

This is a classic case of partisanship being left at the nation's shore when it comes to foreign policy.

However, trade is not viewed as foreign policy, per se. Indeed, in the US trade policy is highly partisan, and the Africa Trade bill that passed out of the Senate Finance Cmte includes, as a political maneuver, fast track authority. That is causing some concern among Democrat supporters of the Africa initiative, including some of its staunchest supporters in the Congressional Black Caucus, who also happen to be some of the staunchest opponents of fast track, which is why the two were paired in one bill. Senate Republicans hope to blunt some of the opposition to fast track by packaging it with the Africa bill strongly supported by Congressional Democrats and the Administration.

The House is set to vote on fast track on Sept 21, and of course, the closer the date gets to the November election the less likely it will pass as a stand-alone bill. However, the Senate is likely to pass the Africa Trade bill early after its return in September. That bill includes, in addition to fast track, the Caribbean Basin Initiative and reauthorization of GSP. Indeed, a source tells us this bill will be "stuffed like a Christmas goose" with enough provisions to get all members "a reason to vote yes." That means, eventually, IMF could be included too. Another source tells us that this is a major trade package that "doesn't include IMF funding, ... yet -- yet being operative word. It's impossible not to see the handwriting on the wall."

Stacking up the trade bill with such amendments could increase the chances of a defeat of fast track on the Sept 21 roll call in the House -- but ironically it could also increase the chances ultimately that fast track

will be passed. The scenario goes like this:

The House has already passed a stand alone Africa Trade bill. Once the Senate passes their version -- with fast track and the many other amendments -- the matter goes to conference. There it is left in the hands of the conferees. Since this bill deals with tariffs it is a revenue raising measure and thus must "originate" in the House, or in other words, the House will chair the conference. This, to some extent, elevates the leverage of the House Ways and Means Cmte Ranking Democrat, Charles Rangel (D-NY) -- a senior member of the Congressional Black Caucus. Rangel has, as one source tells us, "a tough decision to make" between the Democrats general, and the Black Caucus' specific opposition to fast track, and their support of the Africa initiative. Allowing his Democratic and caucus colleagues a chance to vote no, on record, on fast track makes it much easier for him to accept the fast track language in conference.

If fast track does pass the House then, since it already passed the Senate, becomes its own vehicle for a conference, and guys like Rangel and other senior Democrats on the conference committee could spend more time keeping it from the light of day -- especially as Congress will only be in about 4, maybe 5 weeks before adjourning sine die for the election.

Of course, spending issues, and a potential government shut-down could push this whole trade debate off the schedule completely. There is a faction of Republicans in the House who believe that if the government were shut down due to a budget disagreement with the President the

Republican Congress would "win" politically. Frankly, we can't see that at all. The government was shutdown once due to a Presidential veto of Congressionally-passed appropriations -- and Pres. Clinton "won" that one as the public blamed Congress, not the President. Now, with Clinton still getting high -- albeit shallow -- ratings, in part because the public believes "Ken Starr and the Republicans are out to get him," we don't think Congress could lay blame on a shutdown at Clinton's feet. Actually, such a move could "deepen" Clinton's shallow support in the polls, and benefit Democrats in November. Bottom-line, September will see -- like in every election year at the close of Congress -- parliamentary chaos as all sides maneuvering their agendas. But like the lottery, "you have to play to win" and the fact that during the last month of the Congress that fast track is "in play" is a come back that few would have predicted a year or 18 months ago.

9. CALENDAR: TOMORROW

August 14, 1998

FRIDAY

USDA/NASS Cheddar Cheese Prices Report

USDA/NASS Cattle on Feed Report

USDA/NASS Milk Production Report

ATT/EASYLINK # 62817020

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===== ATTACHMENT 1 =====
ATT CREATION TIME/DATE: 0 00:00:00.00

TEXT:

Message Mail Header

Status: READ

Priority: FIRST CLASS (NORMAL)

Importance: NORMAL

Sensitivity: NORMAL

Delivery Receipt Requested

Creation Date: 13-Aug-1998 06:44:35.00 pm

Modification Date: 13-Aug-1998 06:44:35.00 pm

Submit Date: 13-Aug-1998 06:46:26.00 pm

Delivery Date: 13-Aug-1998 06:48:00.00 pm

From: Anita Chomsky

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Subj: Ag Perspectives

===== END ATTACHMENT 1 =====

===== ATTACHMENT 2 =====
ATT CREATION TIME/DATE: 0 00:00:00.00

TEXT:

RFC-822-headers:

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13 Aug 1998 18:46:11 EDT

Received: from Storm.EOP.GOV by PMDF.EOP.GOV (PMDF V5.1-9 #29131)

with ESMTP id <01J0KCRDPGSG00DO3R@PMDF.EOP.GOV> for heath_d@a1.eop.gov; Thu,

13 Aug 1998 18:46:03 -0400 (EDT)

Received: from postal.clark.net ([168.143.0.17])

by STORM.EOP.GOV (PMDF V5.1-10 #29131)

with ESMTP id <01J0KCQIFXQA000UUR@STORM.EOP.GOV> for heath_d@al.eop.gov; Thu,

13 Aug 1998 18:45:21 -0400 (EDT)

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by postal.clark.net (8.9.1/8.9.1) with ESMTP id SAA07202; Thu,

13 Aug 1998 18:46:08 -0400 (EDT)

Received: from shell.clark.net (anitac@clark.net [168.143.0.8])

by loas.clark.net (8.8.8/8.8.8) with ESMTP id SAA24807; Thu,

13 Aug 1998 18:45:59 -0400 (EDT)

Received: from localhost (anitac@localhost) by shell.clark.net (8.8.8/8.8.8)

with SMTP id SAA24616; Thu, 13 Aug 1998 18:44:36 -0400 (EDT)

To: Undisclosed recipients:

X-Authentication-warning: shell.clark.net: anitac owned process doing -bs

===== END ATTACHMENT 2 =====

ARMS Email System

RECORD TYPE: FEDERAL (TRP NOTES MAIL)

CREATOR: cqwa15375 (cqwa15375@cq.com@INET@LNGTWY [UNKNOWN])

CREATION DATE/TIME:17-AUG-1998 04:31:00.00

SUBJECT: Nitealert Report - JILL

TO: M. Jill Gibbons (M. Jill Gibbons@eop [UNKNOWN])

READ:UNKNOWN

TEXT:

!=====

!

! NiteAlert Created for EOP OFFICE OF MGMT & BUDGET

! 17-AUG-1998 03:21:33

!

!=====

! BILLTRACK DATABASE

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! BILLTEXT DATABASE

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! NEWS DATABASE

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CQ's WASHINGTON ALERT 08/17/98

FARM LOBBY MAKING ITS LAST-DITCH PUSH FOR FAST TRACK

Afternoon News Highlights

Item Key: 14855

FARM LOBBY MAKING ITS LAST-DITCH PUSH FOR FAST TRACK

By Bob Gravely, CQ Staff Writer

When a House vote on renewing the president's fast-track trade negotiating authority was called off last November, many supporters thought the effort was dead until at least next year. It would only become more difficult to pick up the votes necessary to cobble together a majority as this year's elections approached, the thinking went.

That may still prove to be the case if the House votes on fast-track legislation in late September, as Republican leaders have pledged. Pro-labor Democrats -- a key opposition bloc last year -- are no more eager to vote for the trade authority now, when they are counting on union activists to boost voter turnout in November. And hard-core protectionists within the GOP may be as reluctant as ever, too.

But a broad coalition of groups that lobby on behalf of farmers has stepped up the pressure for fast track and is hoping for a different outcome. "There is a renewed sense of urgency in farm country," said Chuck Lambert, chief economist for the National Cattlemen's Beef Association.

Battered this year by drought and extreme heat in the Southwest, farmers are increasingly feeling the impact of Asia's financial crisis, which has affected both commodities prices and farm exports. The latest estimates have agricultural exports down \$5 billion from a year ago.

Fast track and full funding for the International Monetary Fund have emerged as two of the top legislative priorities for farm interests, who see a healthy export market as crucial. Republican leaders have cited the increased pressure from farm groups as the basis for believing fast-track legislation will pass this year.

"It's a much different situation than it was a year ago," said House Agriculture Chairman Bob Smith, R-Ore.

"I believe we can pass [fast track] this year," declared Ways and Means Chairman Bill Archer, R-Texas.

Fast-track authority allows the president to submit trade agreements to Congress for up-or-down votes within 90 days, with no amendments allowed. Without such a procedure, according to trade experts, foreign governments are reluctant to negotiate agreements with the United States for fear that members of Congress will force additional bargaining to seek concessions beneficial to their states or districts.

Every president since Gerald R. Ford has enjoyed fast-track authority, but the most recent extension lapsed at the end of 1994.

The Senate demonstrated last year on two procedural votes that it could vote to renew fast track with a filibuster-proof majority, but the legislation stalled in the House, despite arm-twisting by the White House and the Republican leadership. Most House Democrats and about 60 labor-friendly or protectionist-minded Republicans refused to support the bill. The critics charged that fast track would do little to guarantee tighter labor and environmental standards in other countries that would be exporting products to the United States, thus endangering U.S. jobs.

A SEAT AT THE TABLE

Agriculture lobbyists say that securing a seat at the table for the United States at next year's World Trade Organization talks on agriculture and at other negotiations is a must, and that fast track is key to that goal.

"It is very important we get fast-track authority passed so we can be there as a full participant," said Scott Shearer, director of national relations for Farmland Industries Inc. and co-chairman of the Agricultural Coalition for Fast Track, which represents 79 agriculture-related groups.

Shearer and other coalition members, sometimes in conjunction with the Business Roundtable and other groups supporting fast track, have pressed lawmakers in letters and meetings in recent weeks. But some involved say the outcome may depend on pressure applied within members'

districts.

Karen Fegley, director of the Wheat Export Trade Education Committee, said that while the Washington representatives of farm groups generally supported fast track last year, there was no groundswell of support from farmers.

But Fegley said the Asian financial crisis and other events are changing that. Lambert, of the Cattlemen's Beef Association, says it has been easier to mobilize producers and state groups this year. Lambert said lawmakers will hear plenty about farmers' problems at state and county fairs during this month's recess.

SWEETENER OFFERED

Fast-track supporters are hoping a deal between Archer and Smith could bring around several members of the Agriculture panel who were on the fence last year.

Archer said that when a fast-track bill reaches the House floor, a provision will be added that would permit members of the Agriculture Committee to review and comment on trade agreements that have been initialed by the administration before they are formally presented to Congress and are beyond the reach of amendments. Members of Ways and Means would have the same prerogative.

House Agriculture's top Democrat, Charles W. Stenholm, Texas, a

fast-track supporter, said the review privilege "could be enough" to put fast track over the top this year.

NO PACIFYING LABOR

Labor's opposition remains a formidable obstacle to fast track, especially during the campaign season. Pro-trade Democrats have accused Republicans of using the issue to force them to cast a difficult vote that could offend labor and other Democratic constituencies on the eve of the election. Although President Clinton wants fast-track authority, the administration has made clear it would prefer to wait until next year for a House vote.

"They're doing it in a way that's designed to make it a political issue, not international economic policy," presidential spokesman Michael McCurry complained during a recent news conference.

Because of that, few fast-track supporters expect Clinton to work hard to win the necessary votes from House Democrats this year. Despite Clinton's concerted efforts last year, labor unions and environmental groups still were able to line up 80 percent of House Democrats against fast track.

There are no more items to read.

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CQ's WASHINGTON ALERT 09/07/98

FAST-TRACK'S FOES SEE NO CHANCE FOR PASSAGE BY HOUSE

Pulse of Congress/Insight

(NEWS 09/08/98; 52 lines)

Item Key: 15022

FAST-TRACK'S FOES SEE NO CHANCE FOR PASSAGE BY HOUSE

By Elizabeth A. Palmer, CQ Staff Writer

Don't call them complacent, but opponents of fast-track trade legislation are heading into this month's House battle confident they can kill the bill.

"We don't see any real erosion on the Democratic side," said Sherrod Brown, D-Ohio, a key vote counter for the Democrats.

Jack Quinn, R-N.Y., in charge of rounding up the anti-fast track votes on his side of the aisle, agreed. "It is more likely that we will pick up more [no votes] than we had last time," he said.

Speaker Newt Gingrich, R-Ga., has pledged to bring the fast-track legislation (HR2621) to the House floor the week of Sept. 21. Fast-track authority allows a president to bring trade agreements to Congress for an up-or-down vote within 90 days, with no amendments allowed.

All modern presidents have had the authority, which is seen as a key tool for trade negotiators. But the authority expired in 1994, and efforts to revive it since then have been unsuccessful. The GOP leadership held the House in for a rare weekend session last November hoping to push the bill through but yanked it back at the last minute when it was clear the measure faced defeat.

At the time, it appeared that just 38 Democrats would support the bill, with about 156 Republicans in the "yes" category -- two dozen short of the 218 votes needed for passage.

In a bow to two groups that strongly support fast track, the business community and farmers, Gingrich revived the effort this year. The Senate Finance Committee in July approved an omnibus trade package (HR1432) that includes fast-track language. But several factors are working against the legislation in the House.

First, said Quinn, some Republicans were leaning toward voting for fast track last year only because it was not a campaign year. "The fact that it's scheduled so close to an election helps us," he said.

And President Clinton, who last year twisted arms to turn some Democratic votes, this year plans to sit out the battle. He does not want to strong-arm Democrats who need labor backing in their elections to cast a vote that unions would hold against them.

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"Democrats are hardly going to switch from no votes to yes to help Newt Gingrich," Brown said.

There are no more items to read.

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CQ's WASHINGTON ALERT 09/07/98

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CQ's WASHINGTON ALERT 09/07/98

OPPOSTION TO FAST TRACK

Other news events

* New *

(SCHEDULE 09/08/98)

Item Key: 27

OPPOSTION TO FAST TRACK * New *

Sen. Byron Dorgan, D-N.D., will hold a news conference to announce the formation of a coalition of national and regional organizations representing family farmers and rural citizens who oppose fast track trade legislation.

Sept. 8 11:30 am Senate Swamp, Capitol Bldg.

Contact: Dana McCallum or Barry Piatt at 202-224-2551

Information verified as of 07:11pm 09/04/98

There are no more items to read.

You are in SCHEDULE

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SUBJECT: Is Madeleine Albright reaching her goals

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READ:UNKNOWN

TEXT:

Is Madeleine Albright reaching her goals....

By Michele Blue, AFSA Legislative Intern, and

Ken Nakamura, Director for Congressional Relations

(This was prepared at the request of the Foreign Service Retiree

Association

of Florida, Mr. Eddie Deerfield, Chairman)

In the February issue of State Magazine, Secretary Madeleine
Albright

presented the major challenges for the Administration to advance their 1998
policy agenda on Capitol Hill. She listed six major goals:

1. "The first is money. We must build on progress made last year in
gaining
bipartisan support for the President's full request for funding
international affairs.
2. "Next, the President needs "fast track" authority to negotiate new
trade

agreements that create better jobs for Americans and help our economy grow.

3. "A third challenge is gaining congressional support to further implement the Dayton Accords.

4. "The multinational effort to build peace in Bosnia reflects the importance of a fourth test for 1998: to gain the Senate's consent to enlarge NATO, perhaps the best friend peace has ever had.

5. "A fifth legislative test for 1998 is whether we will pay what we owe to the United Nations and the International Monetary Fund. ... This hurts America. And it is an open invitation to those around the world hostile to our leadership to run America down.

6. "A sixth test of foreign policy leadership this year is whether Congress approves the proposed Africa Growth and Opportunity Act. The Administration strongly supports this initiative, drafted by Republican and Democratic leaders, to support a new American approach to a new Africa."

Has the Secretary met these challenges to gain congressional support that she outlined in February? Congress is ending its August recess, we can

step

back and sum up its actions so far with regard to the above six points to see how close we are to the objectives set. In many cases, the Congress has

acted upon legislation, but these bills are far from being finalized. That means a close watch by constituents is in order for September as Congressmen

rush to pass legislation before the 105th Congress ends and campaigning for mid-term elections begins.

>> THE MONEY . Secretary Albright's first challenge is getting Congress

to accept Administration's Fiscal Year 1999 request for foreign affairs funding. From the beginning, it was clear that this would be a difficult task because the request was \$1 billion higher than the FY99 amount for the International Affairs Account in the 1997 Balanced Budget Agreement. Of the

two largest bills that deal with foreign affairs funding, the Commerce, Justice, State, and the Judiciary Bill (Title IV, the State Department and Related Agencies) and the Foreign Operations bill, only the former passed the House and Senate before the August recess. The House version of the Foreign Operations bill is stalled, and the Senate passed its version in early September. The House delay is due to a split, primarily among House Republicans, regarding the full funding of the IMF of \$18 billion. These two bills, although slowly working their way through Congress, do not meet the Administration's request and both, could have veto threats against them

for a variety of reasons including the funding levels. Among these accounts, the discrepancies vary, but there is a general aggregate decrease of \$800 million. These numbers are being challenged by the many agencies that it hurts, with the backing of the Secretary of State.

>> IMF AND UN ARREARAGES. Secretary Albright's challenge to gain congressional support for arrears payments to the UN and IMF relates to this

appropriation conflict. Due to the disagreement over IMF credit there is a hold on the Foreign Operations bill in the House, and the discussion of UN dues is still tied to the controversial Mexico City population policy language. UN arrearage payments by the Congress, appropriated in the Commerce, Justice, State and the Judiciary Bill, equal the request by the Administration of \$475 million. However, the difficulty in having the funds

released is that it would require a compromise on Mexico City. This bill will go to Conference Committee in September.

>> "FAST TRACK." Another bill that concerns Secretary Albright's goals set

in February includes the two issues of "fast track" legislation and the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act. The bill which brings the two issues together is called the Trade and Tariff Act of 1998 (S.2400) and further divides Democrats and Republicans. Many of the Democrats, who support the Africa initiative, will now struggle with the idea of passing a bill that also includes the "fast track" language that many in their party oppose. Democrats are charging that election year politics are being played in

bringing the two issues together. The "fast track" language allows the President to speed up trade agreements by sending them to Congress for quick

up-or-down votes which does not allow Congress to alter negotiated agreements. This bill will go to the Senate floor in September and, according to the respected magazine, Congressional Quarterly, will pass without trouble. But it will be hotly debated in the House, with House Minority Leader Dick Gephardt leading the opposition.

>> THE DAYTON PEACE ACCORDS. The third goal outlined among the Secretary's

challenges, the Dayton Peace Accords, is included in the Defense Appropriations Bill that will also go to a Conference Committee in September

to resolve differences between the House and Senate-passed versions of the bill. An amendment included in the Defense spending bill that would reduce the U.S. force currently in Bosnia by 6,200 troops was defeated in the Senate by 68-31 in late July. The Senate has appropriated the \$1.9 billion President's request to Bosnia in its version of the Defense Appropriations bill (S.2132), but funding is not included in the House version (HR 4103). In S.2132, there are no apparent restrictions on the \$1.9 billion and so it should be wholeheartedly backed by the Administration when discussed by Congress in September.

>> NATO EXPANSION. The Secretary's efforts to enlarge NATO have also been

successful within Congress. On April 30, 1998, the Senate voted to admit

Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic into NATO. This acceptance is due in part to heavy pressure on Congress by the Administration, especially personal attention by President Clinton, Secretary Albright, and Secretary of Defense William Cohen. The expansion passed with a strong majority in the Senate of 80-19, but some hesitation was seen among lawmakers who, as Senator Joseph Biden, the ranking Democrat on the Foreign Relations Committee, said "now want to wait for evidence that Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic can be integrated without the adverse effects critics had predicted." Such effects could be a strained relationship with Russia and over use of U.S. military overseas.

POLICY TO POLITICS. It is evident from these actions that Secretary Albright has left a noticeable mark at the Capitol to expand and improve the role of the United States around the world. Since presenting the six challenges in February, the Secretary has taken significant steps to meet these goals by being a catalyst for solid relationships between the Administration and the Congress. However, the dynamics of negotiations that foster these relationships are changing at this time of year; as November approaches, minds turn towards mid-term election results. The policy issues of Secretary Albright's international affairs agenda are instead becoming issues of politics.

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ECONOMICS AND FINANCE: DEFENSE SPENDING

Scheduled Events

(NEWS 09/21/98; 41 lines)

Item Key: 15379

ECONOMICS AND FINANCE: DEFENSE SPENDING

By Sumana Chatterjee, CQ Staff Writer

Conferees are expected to meet and complete work Wednesday on the fiscal 1999 defense appropriations bill (HR4103). The House may take up the measure by the end of the week, possibly on Saturday.

Combined with the military construction spending bill and defense-related appropriations in other bills, the measure would bring defense-related funding for fiscal 1999 to roughly \$271 billion, the ceiling set by last year's balanced-budget law (PL 105-33).

The Senate version, passed on July 30, closely tracks President Clinton's budget request, although there is one minor difference: the Senate bill provides a 3.6 percent military pay raise, instead of the 3.1 percent that Clinton requested and the House included in its version that passed June 24. The Senate adopted the higher figure by voice vote.

One contentious issue that must be resolved is Clinton's request for \$1.9 billion for the U.S. deployment in Bosnia. The president asked that

the money be designated as emergency funding, exempt from the limits on defense spending set by the budget law, and the Senate went along. The House, however, included no Bosnia funding in its bill.

The administration has threatened a presidential veto of the bill if it contains a House provision, sponsored by David E. Skaggs, D-Colo., that would bar the use of funds for U.S. forces to conduct offensive military operations unless authorized by Congress pursuant to its constitutional authority to declare war.

"This provision would send the wrong signal to the world, including U.S. resolve" in military actions in Iraq and Bosnia, including Kosovo, according to an administration policy statement. The provision "could be interpreted to restrict the president's exercise of constitutional authority."

If history is a teacher, the Skaggs language may not survive the conference process. Skaggs added a similar provision last spring to the House version of the supplemental appropriations bill (PL 105-174), but it was dropped in conference with the Senate.

[ThisWeek]

ECONOMICS AND FINANCE: TREASURY-POSTAL SPENDING

Scheduled Events

(NEWS 09/21/98; 48 lines)

Item Key: 15380

ECONOMICS AND FINANCE: TREASURY-POSTAL SPENDING

By Bob Gravely, CQ Staff Writer

House and Senate appropriators may begin conference negotiations this week on the fiscal 1999 Treasury-Postal appropriations bill (HR4104).

Two key issues conferees will have to resolve are whether to impose term limits on top staff members at the Federal Election Commission (FEC) and how to pay for federal agencies' efforts to fix their year 2000 computer problems.

Republicans had tried in both chambers to add language to impose a four-year term limit on the FEC's general counsel and staff director. To be reappointed, both officials need the votes of four members of the six-member commission, which is evenly split between Democrats and Republicans.

The language was stripped from the House bill on a procedural move and was watered down in the Senate bill after Democrats threatened to

stall the bill indefinitely over the issue.

But the language has support from House Appropriations Committee Chairman Robert L. Livingston, R-La., and other key Republicans and could re-emerge during the conference.

Republicans say the provision was intended to ensure that the FEC operates in a bipartisan manner by requiring its top officials to gain the support of both Democrats and Republicans.

But Democrats complain that the move was aimed at the FEC's current general counsel, Lawrence Noble, and the FEC's efforts to crack down on "soft money" donations to political parties. Democrats also contend that the restrictions would make FEC officials fearful of losing their jobs if they angered either party.

Another issue will be \$3.25 billion in emergency funding included in the Senate bill to help the federal government fix the Year 2000 computer glitch. GOP budget hawks in the House opposed including \$2.25 billion in Year 2000 funding in the House bill because emergency funding measures do not have to be offset with other cuts. They succeeded in stripping the money from the bill on the House floor.

Overall, the Senate measure would provide \$29.9 billion for the Treasury Department, the executive office of the president, the Postal Service and several independent agencies, including the FEC. The House version would provide \$26.6 billion.

[ThisWeek]

3 of 55 items

CQ's WASHINGTON ALERT 09/21/98

ECONOMICS AND FINANCE: ENERGY-WATER SPENDING

Scheduled Events

(NEWS 09/21/98; 27 lines)

Item Key: 15381

ECONOMICS AND FINANCE: ENERGY-WATER SPENDING

By Sumana Chatterjee, CQ Staff Writer

House and Senate conferees likely will meet this week on the energy and water spending bill (HR4060), which contains some difficult issues to be resolved, including funding for the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA).

The House version eliminates TVA funding while the Senate bill calls for \$70 million for the agency. Other funding disputes involve dams, levees and other water projects.

Another sticking point is funding for the Department of Energy

stockpile stewardship program, which is responsible for maintaining and refurbishing the nation's nuclear arsenal. The Senate bill included \$4.4 billion, compared with the House's \$4.1 billion.

The White House is unlikely to veto the bill but has expressed concern about funding levels, particularly increases for the Army Corps of Engineers at the expense of other programs. The House bill included \$1.46 billion for the Corps construction account, while the Senate version included \$1.25 billion. Both levels are well above the \$784 million requested by President Clinton.

The House passed its \$21.1 billion version 405-4 on June 22; the Senate passed its \$21.4 billion version on June 18.

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ECONOMICS AND FINANCE: LEGISLATIVE BRANCH SPENDING

Scheduled Events

(NEWS 09/21/98; 33 lines)

Item Key: 15382

ECONOMICS AND FINANCE: LEGISLATIVE BRANCH SPENDING

By Rebecca Adams, CQ Staff Writer

The House is expected to vote Thursday on the conference report to the legislative branch appropriations bill (HR4112), which would provide roughly \$2.3 billion for fiscal 1999.

The bill provides \$76.8 million for the salaries for the Capitol Police, including additional pay for officers who work Sundays, holidays and at night. Lawmakers agreed to those differentials, long sought by the police, in the wake of the July 24 Capitol shooting deaths of two officers. Overall, the bill would provide \$83 million for the police, who had sought \$84.5 million.

The bill does not include funding for additional security improvements, including the construction of a visitors' center, that have been requested by the police and the Architect of the Capitol. That funding likely will be considered in a supplemental "emergency" funding bill that could move before the end of the 105th Congress.

Funding to fix the Year 2000 problem in General Accounting Office computers was held to sums for no more than 50 new employees. Lawmakers said they expect a supplemental request next year for more funding.

The Senate agreed to a \$1 million House request for the congressional cemetery near the Anacostia River, where 92 members of Congress are buried. Matching private funds would be added for the

cemetery, which has fallen into disrepair in recent years.

Conferees dropped \$2 million for a one-year commission to study and report on the trade deficit. House Ways and Means Chairman Bill Archer, R-Texas, had questioned the need for such a panel.

[ThisWeek]

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ECONOMICS AND FINANCE: BANKRUPTCY OVERHAUL

Scheduled Events

(NEWS 09/21/98; 34 lines)

Item Key: 15383

ECONOMICS AND FINANCE: BANKRUPTCY OVERHAUL

By Richard Sammon, CQ Staff Writer

The Senate is expected to resume work this afternoon on a bankruptcy overhaul bill that aims to discourage debt-ridden Americans from filing for bankruptcy.

Supporters say the bill (S1301) is needed to address a rate of

consumer bankruptcy filings that has increased sharply because it has become too easy to walk away from debts. The measure would require judges to consider a person's ability to repay at least some secured debts before erasing liabilities.

The Senate worked on the bill sporadically last week, adopting a number of amendments, including one that would exempt Individual Retirement Accounts from bankruptcy proceedings.

Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., may offer an amendment that would require credit card companies to review debt obligations of applicants before approving credit lines.

Tomorrow, members will debate and vote on a Democratic-backed minimum wage amendment. Offered by Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass., it would raise the minimum wage by \$1 over two years, to \$6.15. Republicans argue that such an increase would hamper small businesses and lead to layoffs; Kennedy says businesses can absorb a higher minimum pay rate without cutting jobs.

Republicans are expected to prevail in tabling, or killing, the amendment. The vote is scheduled after tomorrow's party lunches.

The minimum wage amendment is one of a handful of Democratic priorities for the remainder of the session.

[ThisWeek]

ECONOMICS AND FINANCE: TAX CUT BILL

Scheduled Events

(NEWS 09/21/98; 45 lines)

Item Key: 15384

ECONOMICS AND FINANCE: TAX CUT BILL

By Matthew Tully, CQ Staff Writer

Despite a veto threat from President Clinton, House Republican leaders say they will move forward this week with a floor vote on a bill that seeks to cut taxes by about \$80 billion over the next five years.

The bill (HR4579) has drawn sharp criticism from Clinton and other Democrats because it would be funded in large part by a projected budget surplus. Critics say the entire surplus should be used to secure the solvency of the Social Security trust fund, which is projected to go bankrupt in 2032.

Supporters of the plan say it would tap only 10 percent of the surplus -- which is expected to hit \$1.6 trillion over 10 years -- and

leave the remainder in a reserve account until a plan is devised the shore up Social Security.

The showdown between Clinton and the GOP has been expected all year, as Republicans worked to develop the largest tax plan they could pass before members head home for the November elections. Earlier plans ranging from cuts of \$101 billion over five years to \$700 billion over 10 years were scaled back in order to win the support of Senate Republicans.

The House bill, which was approved largely down party lines by the Ways and Means Committee last week, seeks to grant tax relief to farmers, married couples, small businesses, people with savings accounts and students saving for private colleges. It primarily would benefit households earning between \$40,000 and \$100,000 a year.

The bill would reduce the so-called marriage penalty by increasing the standard deduction married couples can claim on their federal income tax forms. It would expedite the phase-in of increased exemptions of the estate tax and would exempt from taxes the first \$400 married couples earn in interest, and the first \$200 in interest individuals earn. It also would allow self-employed individuals to deduct all of the cost of their insurance plans.

Two parts of the bill are paid for without using the surplus: the extension of some tax breaks for big businesses and a section accelerating planned increases on how much working Social Security

recipients can earn before their benefits are cut. Together, the two measures cost about \$6.7 billion over five years

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ECONOMICS AND FINANCE: PROJECTED BUDGET SURPLUS

Scheduled Events

(NEWS 09/21/98; 27 lines)

Item Key: 15385

ECONOMICS AND FINANCE: PROJECTED BUDGET SURPLUS

By Matthew Tully, CQ Staff Writer

Hoping to blunt criticism of their tax bill, House Republican leaders this week will bring up for a vote legislation (HR4578) that would place 90 percent of the projected budget surplus into a reserve account until Congress adopts plans to shore up the Social Security trust fund.

The trust fund is projected to go bankrupt in 2032 as the last of the Baby Boomers are entering retirement. President Clinton has urged

Congress to steer clear this year of spending the surplus, which is expected to hit \$1.6 trillion over the next decade, and use all of it to fix Social Security. He has pledged to veto a Republican tax plan that would take \$80 billion from that surplus.

House Republicans, however, say their plan seeks to protect Social Security while making sure taxpayers receive some benefit from the surplus. They have suggested the money will be frittered away on government programs if it is not returned to taxpayers. The remaining surplus, they say, could be used to create Individual Retirement Accounts.

Last week, Democrats in the Ways and Means Committee unsuccessfully offered an amendment to the bill that would have walled off 100 percent of the surplus for the trust fund.

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COMMERCE AND LABOR: FAST-TRACK AUTHORITY

Scheduled Events

(NEWS 09/21/98; 38 lines)

Item Key: 15386

COMMERCE AND LABOR: FAST-TRACK AUTHORITY

By Matthew Tully, CQ Staff Writer

The House is scheduled to consider fast-track trade legislation on Friday, but a vote on the measure could be delayed until next week because supporters of the legislation indicated they are from six to eight votes short of the number needed for passage.

The bill (HR2621) would allow the president to negotiate trade agreements with other countries, then present his deal to Congress for a straight up-or-down vote with no amendments. While a scheduled vote this week has been on the agenda for some time, House Speaker Newt Gingrich, Ga., said next week also is an option.

On Friday, House Majority Leader Dick Armey, Texas, left open the possibility that the bill could be considered on Saturday if a weekend session is scheduled.

Labor unions have opposed the bill and predict they will be able to block the legislation for a second consecutive year. Democratic leaders agree the bill will be defeated.

Backers, including farming and business groups, are urging their rank and file to lobby members of Congress. Republican leaders say agriculture groups will bolster their efforts for passage given current

farm prices and will argue that more markets are needed to sell their crops.

But the bill is receiving no lobbying support from the White House, which sought the legislation last year but now fears it will divide Democrats and anger constituents less than two months before the midterm elections. White House officials have accused Republicans of political gamesmanship for pursuing the legislation.

The Senate Finance Committee has approved an omnibus trade bill that includes the fast-track language, but a vote on that measure is not expected before next week.

[ThisWeek]

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COMMERCE AND LABOR: HIGH-TECH VISA PROGRAM

Scheduled Events

(NEWS 09/21/98; 38 lines)

Item Key: 15387

COMMERCE AND LABOR: HIGH-TECH VISA PROGRAM

By Bob Gravely, CQ Staff Writer

Despite uncertainty about its chances for passage, a bill that would increase the number of visas available for foreign workers with high-tech expertise is on the House floor agenda later this week.

Lined up against the bill (HR3736) are the Clinton administration, Democrats worried about displacing American workers, and some anti-immigration and labor-friendly Republicans. But proponents say that computer and other high-tech companies are suffering because of a shortage of skilled workers. The measure was bumped from last week's floor schedule.

This year's allotment of 65,000 visas, known as "H1-B" visas, expired in May. The bill would grant an additional 20,000 visas for the rest of the year; increase the number of six-year H1-B visas to 95,000 in fiscal 1999; and bring the number up to 115,000 during fiscal 2001 and fiscal 2002.

The bill slated for the floor is a different version than a compromise fashioned by the Judiciary Committee. That measure contained requirements that U.S. companies seeking to hire H-1B workers promise that no American worker would be laid off to accommodate a foreign employee and that the companies had made good-faith efforts to recruit domestic employees before looking abroad.

The new version, which represents a compromise with the Senate,

narrows those requirements to apply only to companies that employ large numbers of H-1B workers, and would place the burden on workers to file complaints about alleged violations.

Melvin Watt, N.C., ranking Democrat on the Immigration and Claims Subcommittee, intends to offer the committee-passed proposal as a substitute amendment. Watt has added one provision to the substitute -- a requirement that applicants for the visas pay an additional \$500 to contribute to training programs for American workers.

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CONGRESS AND GOVERNMENT: FAA REAUTHORIZATION

Scheduled Events

(NEWS 09/21/98; 30 lines)

Item Key: 15388

CONGRESS AND GOVERNMENT: FAA REAUTHORIZATION

By Richard Sammon, CQ Staff Writer

Pending agreement among a handful of members, the Senate later this

week may take up a \$10.1 billion reauthorization of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

Democrats objected on two occasions last week to attempts by Majority Leader Trent Lott, Miss., to call up the legislation (S2279). Lott considers it a "must-pass" bill that would fund airport construction projects in every state.

Objections relate to authorization levels for airport improvement projects in Illinois and Virginia, according to aides on the Commerce Committee. Chairman John McCain, R-Ariz., a key figure in the bill's chances for consideration, said nearly \$2 billion of renovation projects could be delayed if Congress does not clear the measure before adjourning.

Minority Leader Tom Daschle, S.D., said he expected an agreement would be reached to allow consideration this week.

The House passed a version (HR4057) to reauthorize FAA programs at \$10.1 billion in fiscal 1999.

Both bills also would increase funding for airport safety and security measures. The measures would authorize \$5.6 billion for FAA operations, \$2.1 billion for the Facilities and Equipment program and roughly \$2.3 billion for the Airport Improvement Program.

[ThisWeek]

CONGRESS AND GOVERNMENT: POSTAL SERVICE REVIEW

Scheduled Events

(NEWS 09/21/98; 46 lines)

Item Key: 15389

CONGRESS AND GOVERNMENT: POSTAL SERVICE REVIEW

By Rebecca Adams, CQ Staff Writer

A bill aimed at revamping the U.S. Postal Service will be marked up Thursday by the House Government Reform and Oversight Subcommittee on Postal Service.

The legislation would make significant changes to the nation's mail system, which was established in its current form 25 years ago.

The bill (HR22) would give the Postal Service more authority to set stamp prices and permit it to make a profit for services in which it has direct competition.

While loosening other financial restrictions on the Postal Service,

the bill also would strip some of its perks in controlling the market in basic mail delivery and subject the agency to tighter oversight in some areas.

The bill would create two categories for postal rates. A non-competitive group would include regular letters, postcards, magazines and other basic mail for which no real delivery alternative exists. A competitive category would include priority mail, international mail, parcel post and other special mail services also done by a number of private competitors.

For basic mail and non-competitive services, the bill would set a five-year price cap on stamp prices and allow the Postal Service to adjust them each year within the cap.

Currently, stamp prices can be changed only to reflect higher prices in the cost of delivering mail. Under the bill, the Postal Rate Commission could set the five-year price caps according to projections of the Gross Domestic Product and other national economic figures.

The bill would give the Postal Service more flexibility to borrow money and make investments and other financial decisions, many of which currently are controlled by the Treasury Department.

It would establish a pilot project to allow private carriers to use U.S. mailboxes, something current law prohibits.

Federal assistance for Postal Service to the blind and disabled, and for voter registration, would end. The bill also would establish two inspector general offices to oversee internal operations.

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DEFENSE AND FOREIGN POLICY: DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION BILL

Scheduled Events

(NEWS 09/21/98; 41 lines)

Item Key: 15390

DEFENSE AND FOREIGN POLICY: DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION BILL

By Bob Gravely, CQ Staff Writer

House leaders hope to bring the conference report on the fiscal 1999 defense authorization bill to the floor later this week.

Last week, House and Senate conferees announced they had agreed on key compromises in the \$270.5 billion measure (HR3616) concerning harsher satellite export controls for China and gender-integrated training in the armed forces.

Reacting to recent reports that U.S. satellite exports to China have helped Beijing develop its ballistic missile capability, conferees agreed to several changes in U.S. policy.

The conference report would strengthen technology transfer controls by forcing the president to get congressional approval before granting satellite export waivers to American companies; banning exports of missile equipment or technology to China unless the president pledges that they will not undermine the U.S. space launch industry or bolster China's weapons capabilities; and transferring jurisdiction for licensing U.S. satellites from the Commerce Department to the State Department, where it had been until President Clinton changed the policy in 1996.

Negotiators compromised on gender separation during basic training, agreeing to house male and female recruits separately but effectively leaving to the service chiefs the question of whether to train them separately. Conferees also agreed on non-binding sense of Congress language that the sexes should be separated during training.

That statement mirrors the December recommendations of a blue-ribbon panel chaired by former Republican Sen. Nancy Kassebaum-Baker, Kan. (1978-97), in response to mounting allegations of sexual misconduct within the ranks.

On another issue that divided the chambers, Senate conferees

capitulated to House members' decision to prevent the administration from using a commercial nuclear reactor to produce tritium, a substance that amplifies the explosive strength of nuclear weapons.

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DEFENSE AND FOREIGN POLICY: KOSOVO WAR ABUSES

Scheduled Events

(NEWS 09/21/98; 35 lines)

Item Key: 15391

DEFENSE AND FOREIGN POLICY: KOSOVO WAR ABUSES

By Sumana Chatterjee, CQ Staff Writer

As the crisis grows in Kosovo, the House will vote sometime this week on a concurrent resolution against alleged atrocities and war crimes in the former Yugoslavia.

The measure (HCONRES315) would condemn the Serbian police for alleged atrocities, including summary executions, against the ethnic Albanians in Kosovo. U.S. officials say the war could lead thousands to

die this winter. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization is considering air strikes against the Serbs.

Returning from a "human rights and fact-finding mission" to the region, former Sen. Bob Dole, R-Ks., (House 1961-69; Senate 1969-96) who visited the region this month, described a "human catastrophe in the making."

"The war in Kosovo has many of the worst characteristics of the war in Bosnia," Dole warned in an editorial in the Washington Post. The "conflict could easily spread to neighboring countries."

Sponsor Tom Lantos, D-Calif., said the measure would urge that ethnic Albanians from Kosovo be considered for compensation from the assets of Federal Republic of Yugoslavia that have been blocked by the U.S. The Kosovans would join U.S. nationals making claims during the settlement negotiations or when the U.S. takes control of the assets.

The concurrent resolution comes a week after the House passed another one (HCONRES304) that calls for Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic to be declared a war criminal. It urges the United States to turn over information and evidence to indict him at the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, which has jurisdiction over war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide.

[ThisWeek]

ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY: MINING LAW OVERHAUL

Scheduled Events

(NEWS 09/21/98; 55 lines)

Item Key: 15392

ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY: MINING LAW OVERHAUL

By Sumana Chatterjee, CQ Staff Writer

Several bills aimed at overhauling mining and royalty laws will be marked up in the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee on Wednesday.

Lawmakers will consider a measure (S1102), the 1872 General Mining Law, to ensure fair economic returns from mining on federal lands, continued mineral production in the United States and compliance with environmental laws.

Under the bill, a uniform royalty system would be established in which miners would pay market value for land mined and give a percentage of their profits as royalties. This system would replace the current royalty rate that is determined by the mineral's value before production

costs are considered.

The measure would exempt small miners from paying fees for the first 25 claims and provide royalty relief for yearly profits of less than \$50,000.

The bill would require lands to be returned to the public sector if they are not developed for mineral production, and prevent mining interests from using patented land for purposes other than mining. The measure would impose a \$25 filing fee for mining claims and a \$100 annual claim maintenance fee.

The measure would require miners to comply with all federal, state and local environmental laws concerning land use and reclamation and calls for civil penalties against violators. Lands disturbed by mining would have to be refurbished to prevent environmental degradation. The measure also would create a program to address environmental problems associated with abandoned mines by directing fees and royalties to cleanup programs.

ROYALTY TAX. Another bill (S327) would charge hardrock mining companies that operate on federal land a 5 percent royalty on mineral deposits, to be used for cleanup efforts. The bill also would permanently extend and increase the holding fee imposed on all miners except those holding 10 or fewer claims.

CLEANUP FUNDS. Also on the slate is a measure (S326) that would

authorize the federal government to tax on mining companies operating on federal lands. The money would be used to pay for cleanup of abandoned, contaminated hardrock mines.

The measure would tax companies operating on land bought under the 1872 mining law.

The law, enacted to encourage the settlement of the West, did not charge royalties for the extraction of minerals from federal lands, and miners were able to buy or "patent" land for as little as \$2.50 per acre.

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ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY: CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

Scheduled Events

(NEWS 09/21/98; 34 lines)

Item Key: 15393

ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY: CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

By Sumana Chatterjee, CQ Staff Writer

Under suspension of the rules, the House this week will consider a bill (HR4017) that would reauthorize energy conservation and export programs through 2003.

The legislation would extend programs authorized in the Energy Policy and Conservation Act of 1975 (PL 94-163), including domestic energy conservation programs in states, localities, schools and hospitals, and export-promotion programs for renewable-energy and energy-efficient products.

The bill would reauthorize a program under the Energy Conservation and Production Act of 1976 (PL 94-385) that offers federal grants to state and local agencies to reduce the home energy costs of low-income families.

The measure also addresses "a failure" of the Energy Policy Act of 1992 (PL 102-486), according to John Shimkus, R-Ill. The 1992 law aims to displace up to 30 percent of the imported petroleum used in the transportation sector with domestically produced alternative fuels by 2010. The legislation would grant fleet managers incentives to use a type of biodiesel fuel -- a biodegradable substance made from non-petroleum renewable feedstocks such as soybean oil -- mixed with conventional diesel fuel.

The 1992 law, created to reduce U.S. dependence on foreign oil, requires large motor vehicle fleets to include an increasing percentage

of "alternative fuel vehicles" as part of their new vehicle purchases.

The bill would allow such fleets to receive credit for burning a type of biodiesel, rather than awarding credit based solely on the purchase of natural gas vehicles.

[ThisWeek]

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ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY: GREAT LAKES MANAGEMENT

Scheduled Events

(NEWS 09/21/98; 28 lines)

Item Key: 15394

ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY: GREAT LAKES MANAGEMENT

By Sumana Chatterjee, CQ Staff Writer

The House this week will consider a bill that would authorize \$23 million over four years for Great Lakes management, environmental conservation and continued wildlife restoration.

The bill (HR1481) would provide \$9 million from fiscal 1999 through fiscal 2002 for Great Lakes resource management offices in Michigan,

Wisconsin and New York, and \$3.5 million annually in the same period for fish and wildlife restoration projects.

The bill would reauthorize a 1990 law (PL 101-596) that sought to revitalize the five lakes and more than 10,000 miles of shoreline that constitute the largest system of surface freshwater on earth. It would implement the recommendations of a 1995 Great Lakes fishery resources study authorized by the 1990 law and create a committee to review restoration proposals.

To satisfy a requirement in the 1990 law that managers find outside sources to fund at least 25 percent of resources projects, the legislation would allow cash or in-kind contributions, such as personal property donations or volunteering.

The 1995 study found that the problems facing the Great Lakes region include chemical contamination, over-exploitation of fish and wildlife resources and the introduction of non-indigenous species.

[ThisWeek]

(NEWS 09/21/98; 29 lines)

Item Key: 15395

ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY: WATER RIGHTS LEGISLATION

By Sumana Chatterjee, CQ Staff Writer

The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee will mark up controversial legislation (S725) Wednesday that would transfer water rights from the Interior Department's Collbran Reclamation Project to the state of Colorado.

The bill would allow an operating license to be issued to local authorities for the project but exempts the license holder for 40 years from numerous environmental laws, including the Endangered Species Act, the Environmental Protection Act and the Clean Water Act.

The reclamation project is the main water supplier for more than 55,000 people in western Colorado and provides electric power to several western states.

Under the bill, areas served by the irrigation project would have to pay the outstanding \$12 million debt on it and submit operational plans to the Interior Department. The districts could not change the operations of the electric power component of the project, and would have to contribute \$600,000 for an endangered fish recovery program.

Because the state has the option to move water after the transfer,
the town of Collbran and its surrounding communities oppose the bill.

The House Resources Committee last week postponed consideration of
its version (HR2506).

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ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY: REGULATING VEHICLE EMISSIONS

Scheduled Events

(NEWS 09/21/98; 25 lines)

Item Key: 15396

ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY: REGULATING VEHICLE EMISSIONS

By Sumana Chatterjee, CQ Staff Writer

Legislation that would tighten vehicle emissions standards along the
U.S.-Mexico border will be marked up Wednesday by the Senate Environment
and Public Works Committee.

The House-passed measure (HR8) would require U.S. customs officials to deny entry to non-commercial vehicles from Mexico that do not meet state or local emissions standards. It calls for fines and penalties when repeated entry attempts are made.

The bill's backers argue that some U.S. citizens and legal migrant workers have registered their cars in Mexico to avoid stricter U.S. emissions standards. As a result, daily commuter traffic from Mexico is blamed for increased vehicle air pollution in Southern California.

Under the bill, vehicles could enter freely if the owner or operator obtained certification from the border state verifying that the vehicle meets state regulations. One entry would be granted to obtain such documentation.

States along the Canadian border would not be required to check for emissions compliance, but they could opt into the program.

[ThisWeek]

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ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY: CONCESSIONS CONTRACT DISPUTE

Scheduled Events

(NEWS 09/21/98; 29 lines)

ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY: CONCESSIONS CONTRACT DISPUTE

By Sumana Chatterjee, CQ Staff Writer

Legislation designed to increase competition for gift shop concession contracts in national parks tops a list of bills that the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee has scheduled for markup on Wednesday.

The bill (S624) would end the preferences for gift shop operators at national parks who want to maintain their contracts. These businesses may now renew their contracts without a competitive bidding process. If a new business wants the concessions contract, the existing contractor only has to match the bid to keep the concession.

Dale Bumpers, D-Ark., has been trying for nearly 20 years to overhaul the process, and since he is retiring this fall this is his last chance. His bill would bar the Interior Department from granting preferential contracts to existing concessions operators by repealing the 1965 Concessions Policy Act and establishing a competitive process. However, small family operations that gross less than \$500,000 a year would be able to keep preferences to renew contracts.

On June 11, the Senate passed legislation (S1693) to establish a

National Park Service board to oversee concession contracts -- including reviewing selection of concessionaires -- and mediate disputes between them and national park officials. That bill would authorize a park manager to suspend or terminate concession contracts in certain circumstances.

[ThisWeek]

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ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY: HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Scheduled Events

(NEWS 09/21/98; 25 lines)

Item Key: 15398

ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY: HISTORIC PRESERVATION

By Sumana Chatterjee, CQ Staff Writer

The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee will mark up a bill (S2257) Wednesday that would reauthorize through fiscal 2004 the 32-year-old National Historic Preservation Fund.

The fund provides about one-half of the money for the nation's

historic preservation programs and state governments contribute the other half.

The fund is financed by revenue from royalties paid to the federal government for Outer Continental Shelf oil drilling leases.

Authorization for the deposits of the revenue expired Sept. 30, 1997.

The measure would reauthorize the fund for \$150 million each year through fiscal 2004.

Bill sponsor Mary L. Landrieu, D-La., said the fund underwrites programs such as identifying historic places, working with property owners, providing information and education services to the public, and consulting with federal agencies.

A related bill (HR1522) was introduced in the House but there has been no action.

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ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY: STORAGE TANK CLEANUP

Scheduled Events

(NEWS 09/21/98; 22 lines)

Item Key: 15399

ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY: STORAGE TANK CLEANUP

By Sumana Chatterjee, CQ Staff Writer

The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee on Wednesday will mark up a bill designed to speed the cleanup of leaking underground storage tanks. The measure would require the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to transfer 85 percent of federal funds that normally go to the Leaking Underground Storage Tank trust fund directly to the states.

The House passed its version (HR688) in April 1997.

The trust fund was created in 1986 to assist states in cleaning up petroleum storage tanks, which can leak into groundwater and soil and pose a public health risk. The fund was financed by a one-tenth of a cent gas tax that expired Dec. 1, 1995, and has a balance of \$1 billion.

The bill would require states to enter into cooperative agreements with the EPA to schedule direct allocations from the trust fund for storage-tank cleanup. It also would require the EPA to allocate money based upon the amount of leaking tanks and state contributions to the fund, and by consulting with state agencies and tank owners.

[ThisWeek]

SOCIAL POLICY: ABORTION NOTIFICATION

Scheduled Events

(NEWS 09/21/98; 33 lines)

Item Key: 15400

SOCIAL POLICY: ABORTION NOTIFICATION

By Richard Sammon, CQ Staff Writer

The Senate may turn to legislation (S1645) tomorrow that would make it a federal crime to bypass parental consent and notification laws and transport a minor across state lines for an abortion, but some differences over the measure's language could pose some problems.

The Senate voted, 97-0, on Sept. 11 to proceed to the bill. Many Democrats support the measure's aim but want an agreement to allow up-or-down votes on amendments sought by President Clinton. Democrats may oppose efforts to end debate on the bill itself unless those changes are made.

The White House wants amendments to exempt a girl's family members, such as grandmothers, from prosecution and to require the attorney

general to certify that a case involved a significant federal public interest before prosecution could occur. Republicans say that language would establish too many loopholes.

Also complicating efforts to pass the bill is the Democrats' intention to offer managed care legislation (S1890) as an amendment to any available measure that Majority Leader Trent Lott, Miss., may choose to turn to.

The Senate may vote on invoking cloture on the bill tomorrow. If no agreement is reached on managed care legislation or on related amendments to the bill, Democrats may vote to invoke cloture, which requires 60 votes.

The bill is nearly identical to a House measure (HR3682) that passed July 16.

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SOCIAL POLICY: EDUCATION REAUTHORIZATION

Scheduled Events

(NEWS 09/21/98; 32 lines)

Item Key: 15401

SOCIAL POLICY: EDUCATION REAUTHORIZATION

By Bob Gravely, CQ Staff Writer

If House and Senate negotiators can agree on the last few sticking points, the conference report on the higher education reauthorization bill (HR6) could see action on the House floor this week.

Both chambers passed the legislation by wide margins, but negotiators last week were trying to reach final agreement on provisions to provide lower interest rates on student loans while providing hundreds of millions in special subsidies to commercial banks as an incentive to remain in the college lending market.

Another dispute stems from a provision in the Senate version that would allow states to permit welfare recipients to enroll in vocational or post-secondary education for two years without losing monthly benefits.

Current law, which requires states to have half of their welfare recipients working by fiscal 2002, allows only one year of vocational training.

The House version does not contain a similar provision and conservative Republicans do not want to appear to be relaxing any rules

related to the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families program created two years ago.

The underlying 1965 law authorizes federal student aid through Pell grants, student loans, work-study programs and institutional grants. The measure would alter the oversight of student aid programs by creating a performance-based organization within the Education Department.

[ThisWeek]

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CQ's WASHINGTON ALERT 09/21/98

SOCIAL POLICY: PHYSICIAN-ASSISTED SUICIDE

Scheduled Events

(NEWS 09/21/98; 37 lines)

Item Key: 15402

SOCIAL POLICY: PHYSICIAN-ASSISTED SUICIDE

By Bob Gravely, CQ Staff Writer

A bill that seeks to prevent physicians from prescribing drugs for the purpose of assisted suicide is back on this week's House floor agenda.

The measure (HR4006), originally set for action last week, requires the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) to revoke the prescription-writing license of any doctor who "has intentionally dispensed or distributed a controlled substance with the purpose of causing or assisting in causing the suicide or euthanasia of any individual."

It would exempt doctors whose patients die accidentally from drugs prescribed to relieve pain.

Last year, the DEA concluded that dispensing drugs used in an assisted suicide had no "legitimate medical purpose" and prohibited doctors from doing so. But Attorney General Janet Reno overturned that ruling in June, saying it did not fall under the DEA administrator's jurisdiction.

Judiciary Committee Chairman Henry J. Hyde, R-Ill., the bill's sponsor, said it seeks to "address the culture of death that seems to have taken over this country at both ends of life." The bill would indirectly overturn an Oregon law -- which voters approved twice -- that allows physician-assisted suicide in some circumstances.

Opponents argue that the legislation would interfere with a doctor's ability to prescribe pain-relief drugs for dying patients and could expose physicians to undue civil and criminal liability.

Democrats are expected to offer an amendment to clarify that doctors could not face criminal charges for distributing drugs covered by the bill.

[ThisWeek]

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CQ's WASHINGTON ALERT 09/21/98

SOCIAL POLICY: AID TO IMMIGRANTS

Scheduled Events

(NEWS 09/21/98; 31 lines)

Item Key: 15403

SOCIAL POLICY: AID TO IMMIGRANTS

By Emily Church, CQ Staff Writer

The House is slated to consider a measure Wednesday that would enable about 12,000 mostly poor, elderly immigrants to retain Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Medicaid benefits that were scheduled to be terminated Oct. 1.

The bill (HR4558), approved last week by a Ways and Means subcommittee, is set for action under the expedited suspension of the

rules procedure, which allows no amendments and requires a two-thirds vote for passage.

The 1996 welfare overhaul (PL 104-193) and the 1997 budget-balancing legislation (PL 105-33) mandated terminating benefits for immigrants who could not prove they were in the United States lawfully prior to a specific date.

The bill covers those who have lived here for many years but have lost documents needed to prove it.

"We are ensuring that every elderly or disabled non-citizen already dependent on benefits will remain eligible," said Human Resources Chairman E. Clay Shaw Jr., R-Fla. The extension would cost the government about \$80 million.

The bill would make other, minor changes to federal statutes, including a permanent extension of a state unemployment insurance program created under the North American Free Trade Agreement (PL 103-182).

[ThisWeek]

SOCIAL POLICY: HIV COMPENSATION

Scheduled Events

(NEWS 09/21/98; 42 lines)

Item Key: 15404

SOCIAL POLICY: HIV COMPENSATION

By Rebecca Adams, CQ Staff Writer

The Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee on Wednesday plans to mark up legislation to compensate HIV victims who were infected with tainted blood infusions before the federal government required testing of blood products.

Chairman James M. Jeffords, R-Vt., will likely introduce a substitute to the bill (S358) sponsored by Mike DeWine, R-Ohio, to expand the class of people eligible for compensation.

DeWine's bill, like a measure (HR1023) passed by the House on May 19, would authorize \$750 million to compensate hemophiliacs who were infected between July 1, 1982, and Dec. 31, 1987. In that time, nearly half of the nation's 16,000 hemophiliacs contracted HIV from blood products.

Jeffords' legislation would authorize \$1.8 billion and expand coverage to include nearly 10,000 more individuals who were infected

with the virus that causes AIDS by blood transfusions during emergency care or surgeries.

Regulations put in place a decade ago mandate that the blood supply be tested thoroughly.

Opponents, while praising the intent of Jeffords' amendment, warn that any increase in scope or spending authorization could harm chances for passage this year.

John W. Warner, R-Va., may seek to reduce the authorization level in Jeffords' proposal while retaining the broader eligibility for compensation. This would decrease the amount of money that each individual would receive. The original bill would allow payments of \$100,000.

DeWine is likely to push for a vote on his original version.

The committee is expected to vote on both versions. If both are approved, Senate leaders would determine how to bring the legislation to the floor.

[ThisWeek]

ECONOMICS AND FINANCE: AGRICULTURE SPENDING

Scheduled Events

(NEWS 09/21/98; 36 lines)

Item Key: 15378

ECONOMICS AND FINANCE: AGRICULTURE SPENDING

By Matthew Tully, CQ Staff Writer

With the Midwestern farm crisis worsening, House and Senate conferees this week may try to hash out their differences over the fiscal 1999 agriculture appropriations bill (HR4101).

Last week, House Republicans unveiled a \$4 billion farm relief package that they plan to attach to the bill. Thad Cochran, R-Miss., chairman of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, said he could live with the package, but that some details will have to be ironed out.

The Senate version contains a \$500 million disaster indemnification package, which is now considered inadequate.

The House has approved a non-binding instruction to appropriators to provide disaster relief to farmers struck by drought, disease and low prices on an "emergency" off-budget basis, using the House bill as a

vehicle. But appropriators may not be able to expedite a \$4 billion package without making offsetting cuts, as budget hawks have opposed such action.

The proposed relief package includes a \$1.65 billion increase in crop support payments; \$1.5 billion to assist farmers and ranchers suffering heavy losses in 1998; \$675 million in assistance to producers suffering multi-year losses due to disease and flooding in the upper Midwest; and \$75 million for livestock feed assistance.

Besides farm assistance, the committee will have other differences to work out. The Senate bill provides about \$1 billion more in new budget authority for higher research spending. Moreover, the House version bars the Food and Drug Administration from approving any drugs that chemically induce abortion, while the Senate bill contains controversial meat labeling provisions.

[ThisWeek]

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ECONOMICS AND FINANCE: INTERIOR SPENDING

Scheduled Events

(NEWS 09/21/98; 30 lines)

Item Key: 15377

ECONOMICS AND FINANCE: INTERIOR SPENDING

By Richard Sammon, CQ Staff Writer

If unrelated disputes ranging from farm relief, managed care and campaign finance are avoided, the Senate later this week may return to consideration of the \$13.4 billion Interior spending bill (S2237).

GOP leaders gave a heavy effort to pass the bill last week, but they suspended work when Democrats insisted on debating managed care legislation (S1890), which they wanted to offer as an amendment. Minority Leader Tom Daschle, S.D., and other Midwestern Democrats also planned on forcing more debate and votes on a proposed agricultural relief amendment for farmers. Daschle also has not ruled out offering another campaign finance related amendment to any appropriations bill or other legislation that is on the floor.

Most of the major amendments related to the Interior bill have already been considered. Among the amendments that remain is one by Robert G. Torricelli, D-N.J., that would boost funding for restoration of urban parks.

Majority Leader Trent Lott, R-Miss., may decide to forgo debate on the Interior bill if appropriators take more steps this week to begin crafting an omnibus appropriations bill that might include Interior

funding.

Appropriations Committee Chairman Ted Stevens, R-Alaska, last week said he expects a catchall appropriations measure to be crafted this week or next week and said it may include Interior funds.

[ThisWeek]

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CQ's WASHINGTON ALERT 09/21/98

CAPITOL HILL SHAPES UP FOR SOME SHOWDOWNS

Scheduled Events

(NEWS 09/21/98; 73 lines)

Item Key: 15376

CAPITOL HILL SHAPES UP FOR SOME SHOWDOWNS

By CQ Staff

Congress will get a slow start this week, then probably work into the weekend in a bid to make some of the biggest decisions it will face this fall.

Climactic votes on domestic spending, the defense budget, tax cuts

and trade are all expected in the next six days. But all the while, the vast majority of Americans outside the Beltway will be under the impression that there is only one thing Capitol Hill is focused on: the latest move in the congressional review of Independent Counsel Kenneth W. Starr's case against President Clinton.

By order of the House Judiciary Committee, the world may be viewing sometime today a four-hour videotape of Clinton being questioned by Starr's prosecutors about the details of his sexual encounters with Monica Lewinsky. After that, House Republicans will have to decide what to do next in the increasingly partisan inquiry.

Republicans are also setting up election-year legislative showdowns with the president. They plan a vote this week on several bills the president has vowed to veto, the House's \$80 billion five-year tax cut principal among them. Clinton has also promised to reject the high-technology worker immigration measure the House plans to take up, as well as legislation before the Senate that would criminalize the transport of a girl across state laws for an abortion in a bid to evade state parental notice or consent laws.

Congressional Democrats, meanwhile, have their own election-year fights to pick -- and the Senate rules allow them to do so.

To keep his agenda moving, Majority Leader Trent Lott, R-Miss., has agreed to allow a vote tomorrow on raising the minimum wage as an amendment to the bill that would tighten the consumer bankruptcy law.

But he has drawn the line at allowing the Democrats an opening to get a vote on their managed-care medical insurance regulation bill. Unless Lott and Minority Leader Tom Daschle, D-S.D., resolve their longstanding impasse on this issue, it could thwart efforts to pass the Interior appropriations bill or much else in coming days.

The Interior spending measure is one of many that may yet end up in a package designed to put all the difficult spending decisions into one bundle, ship it to Clinton and dare the president to use his veto by the adjournment date of the 105th Congress.

But a final decision on such a strategy is at least three weeks away, because Congress last week cleared a measure to keep federal spending on autopilot until Oct. 9, nine days into fiscal 1999, and also the target adjournment date.

SPENDING BILL PUSH

The GOP this week wants to push toward enactment five of the dozen remaining spending bills. Conferees will be pressed to cut deals on the measures for energy and water, agriculture and the Treasury and Postal Service. The legislative branch conference agreement of last week may be pushed toward the White House. And by Saturday, the House may be ready to debate a defense appropriations conference report.

During the week, Congress will also work on several measures that Clinton would sign: the annual Pentagon authorization measure, a

reauthorization of higher education programs and a revival of presidential authority to cut trade deals that Congress may then either approve or reject, but not amend.

But that fast-track measure still faces an uphill climb. And it was that very same legislation that collapsed in November, the last time there was a weekend session.

Then, both chambers were open all weekend in a bid to push themselves into adjournment. It did not work.

[ThisWeek]

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STATUS OF APPROPRIATIONS

Hill News Highlights

(NEWS 09/21/98; 99 lines)

Item Key: 15375

STATUS OF APPROPRIATIONS

By CQ Staff

AGRICULTURE (HR4101): House subcommittee markup completed June 10; Senate subcommittee markup completed June 9; Senate full committee markup completed June 11 (SRept105-212); House full committee markup completed June 16 (HRept105-588); PASSED House June 24; PASSED Senate July 16; Senate conferees appointed July 16; House conferees appointed Sept. 15

COMMERCE, JUSTICE, STATE & THE JUDICIARY (HR4276): House subcommittee markup completed June 24; Senate subcommittee markup June completed 23; Senate full committee markup completed June 25 (SRept105-235); House full committee markup completed July 15 (HRept105-636); PASSED Senate July 23; PASSED House August 6; Senate conferees appointed August 31

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA (S2333, HR4380): Senate full committee markup completed July 21 (SRept105-254); House subcommittee markup completed July 24; House full committee markup completed July 30 (HRept105-670); PASSED House August 6

ENERGY & WATER DEVELOPMENT (HR4060): Senate subcommittee markup completed June 2; Senate full committee markup completed June 4 (SRept105-206); House subcommittee markup completed June 10; House full committee markup completed June 16 (HRept105-581); PASSED Senate June 18; PASSED House June 22; Senate conferees appointed July 23; House conferees appointed July 29

FOREIGN OPERATIONS (HR4569, S2334): House subcommittee markup completed

July 15; Senate full committee markup completed July 2 (SRept105-255);
PASSED Senate Sept. 2; House full committee markup completed
Sept. 10 (HRept105-719); PASSED House Sept. 17

INTERIOR: (S2237, HR4193) House subcommittee markup completed June 18;
House full committee markup completed June 25 (HRept105-609); Senate
subcommittee markup completed June 23; Senate full committee markup
completed June 25 (SRept105-227); PASSED House July 23; Senate floor
debate began Sept. 8; Senate floor debate suspended Sept. 16

LABOR/HHS/EDUCATION (HR4274, S2440): House subcommittee markup
completed June 23; House full committee markup completed July 14
(HRept105-635); Senate subcommittee markup completed Sept. 1; Senate
full committee markup completed Sept. 3 (SRept105-300)

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH (HR4112): Senate full committee markup
completed June 4 (SRept105-204); House subcommittee markup completed
June 10; House full committee markup completed June 18 (HRept105-595);
PASSED House June 25; PASSED Senate July 21; Senate conferees appointed
July 21; House conferees appointed Sept. 15; Conference completed
Sept. 18

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION (HR4059): House subcommittee markup
completed June 10; Senate full committee markup completed June 11
(SRept105-213); House full committee markup completed June 16
(HRept105-578); PASSED House June 22; PASSED by Senate June 25;
Senate conferees appointed July 23; House conferees appointed July 23;

Conference completed July 23; Conference report ADOPTED by House July 29 (HRept105-647); Conference report ADOPTED by Senate Sept. 1

NATIONAL SECURITY/DEFENSE (HR4103): House subcommittee markup completed June 4; Senate subcommittee markup completed June 2; Senate full committee markup completed June 4 (SRept105-200); House full committee markup completed June 17 (HRept105-591); PASSED House June 24; PASSED Senate July 30; House conferees appointed Sept. 15

TRANSPORTATION: (HR4328) Senate subcommittee markup completed July 8; Senate full committee markup completed July 14 (SRept105-249); House subcommittee markup completed July 16; House full committee markup completed July 22 (HRept105-648); PASSED Senate July 24; PASSED House July 30; Senate conferees appointed July 30; House conferees appointed Sept. 15

TREASURY/POSTAL SERVICE: (HR4104) House subcommittee markup completed June 11; House full committee markup completed June 17 (HRept105-592); Senate full committee markup completed July 14 (SRept105-251); PASSED House July 16; PASSED Senate Sept. 3; Senate conferees appointed Sept. 3; House conferees appointed Sept. 16

VA, HUD, & INDEPENDENT AGENCIES (HR4194): Senate subcommittee markup completed June 9; Senate full committee markup completed June 11 (SRept105-216); House subcommittee markup completed June 18; House full committee markup completed June 25 (HRept105-610); PASSED Senate July 30; PASSED House July 29; Senate conferees appointed July 30; House

conferees appointed Sept. 15

FY98 SUPPLEMENTAL (HR3579): Senate full committee markup completed March 17 (SRept105-168); House full committee markup completed March 24 (HRept105-469); S1768/S1769 DEBATE COMPLETED by Senate March 26; HR3579 PASSED by House March 31; HR3579 PASSED by Senate March 31 (Senate amended HR3579 to contain the text of S1768); Senate conferees named March 31; House conferees named April 23; Conference completed April 30 (HRept105-504); PASSED House April 30; PASSED Senate April 30; SIGNED by president May 1; Public Law: PL105-174

FY99 CONTINUING RESOLUTION (Sept. 30 to Oct. 9) -- HJRes128: PASSED House Sept. 17; CLEARED Senate Sept. 17

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LAST WEEK IN CONGRESS

Hill News Highlights

(NEWS 09/21/98; 502 lines)

Item Key: 15369

LAST WEEK IN CONGRESS

By CQ Staff

FY 1999 DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION (HR3616)

Conferees agreed on a bill to provide \$270.5 billion for the Defense Department, and reached a compromise on gender separation during basic training. Male and female recruits would be housed separately, but it would be left to the service chiefs to decide whether to train new inductees separately. The bill would strengthen technology transfer controls by requiring congressional approval before granting of satellite export waivers; ban exports of missile equipment or technology to China unless the president pledges they will not undermine the U.S. space launch industry or bolster China's weapons capabilities; switch jurisdiction for licensing U.S. satellites from the Commerce Department back to the State Department, where it rested before President Clinton changed policy in 1996; and prevent the use of commercial nuclear reactors to produce tritium, a substance that amplifies the explosive strength of nuclear weapons. It also includes the administration's \$1.9 billion emergency request for fiscal 1999 peacekeeping operations in Bosnia.

AHEAD: House-Senate conferees expect to complete work Wednesday. House floor action expected late in the week, possibly Saturday.

FY 1999 LEGISLATIVE BRANCH SPENDING (HR4112)

Conferees agreed on legislation that would provide about \$2.3 billion for fiscal 1999 -- an increase of about \$20 million, or less

than 1 percent, from fiscal 1998. The bill would provide \$76.8 million for the Capitol Police, including additional pay for officers who work Sundays, holidays and at night, but does not include money for additional security improvements, including construction of a visitors' center requested by the police and the Architect of the Capitol. That funding likely will be considered in a supplemental "emergency" funding bill that could move before end of the 105th Congress. The bill would also fund up to 50 new employees to fix the Year 2000 problem in General Accounting Office computers.

AHEAD: House floor action is expected on Thursday.

CONTINUING RESOLUTION (HJRES128)

The House passed and the Senate cleared legislation to keep the government functioning in the absence of completed appropriations legislation for nine days into fiscal 1999, which begins Oct. 1.

OSHA APPLIED TO POSTAL SERVICE (S2112)

The House cleared a bill to permit the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to regulate the Postal Service the same way it regulates private businesses. The bill would prohibit the Postal Service from using compliance costs to justify increasing postal rates or cutting services.

'PARTIAL-BIRTH' ABORTION (HR1122)

The Senate failed to override a presidential veto. The chamber was three votes short -- the same as the roll call when the Senate first passed the bill. The bill would have outlawed a procedure described as "partial-birth" abortion except to save life of woman.

FY 1999 FOREIGN OPERATIONS SPENDING (HR4569)

The House passed a bill to provide \$12.5 billion to fund the foreign policy apparatus, including \$3.5 billion in credit for the International Monetary Fund, \$14.5 billion less than White House request. The measure would prohibit assistance to family planning groups that lobby on or otherwise advocate policies on abortion, even if they use their own money. The House removed a section to lift a ban on direct assistance to Azerbaijan and rejected a bid to withdraw funding for Army's School of the Americas.

DIGITAL COPYRIGHT (HR2281)

The Senate passed legislation to protect digitally produced works such as computer software and compact discs. The bill puts the United States in compliance with a 1996 World Intellectual Property Organization treaty.

NUTRITION PROGRAM (HR3874)

The Senate passed legislation to reauthorize through 2003 the Women,

Infants and Children nutrition and health program, which is set to expire Sept. 30.

HEAD START (S2206)

The House passed a bill to reauthorize Head Start, Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). The bill doubles the amount of Head Start funds set aside for education, health and other services to infants and toddlers. It would also set tougher education and training requirements for Head Start teachers; provide new incentives for Head Start centers to work with states and local agencies to provide all-day care and allow for-profit organizations to receive Head Start grants; reauthorize the CDBG program at \$625 million in fiscal 1999 and unspecified amounts through 2003, and create an anti-poverty block grant program. The bill would also reauthorize LIHEAP at the current level of \$2 billion annually through 2003. Republican sponsors dropped a provision to exempt Head Start projects from the Davis-Bacon prevailing wage requirements.

JUVENILE CRIME (S2073)

The House passed a measure to authorize \$10 million a year for five years for the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. The bill would allow prosecutors to decide when juveniles ages 14 and older should be tried as adults in federal court for violent or drug crimes, and consolidate several prevention programs -- including boot camps, treatment for abused and neglected children and school-based

gang-prevention programs -- into a single Juvenile Delinquency Prevention Block Grant Program.

EDUCATION BLOCK GRANTS (HR3248)

The House passed legislation to turn \$2.7 billion in federal education programs, including Goals 2000 and the Technology Literacy Challenge Fund, into block grants to states. The bill would require that 95 percent of the money go directly to local school districts.

DRUG INTERDICTION (HR4300)

The House passed a measure to authorize an estimated \$2.3 billion over three years for drug interdiction programs, including nearly \$600 million for the Customs Service to purchase 20 new surveillance planes; nearly \$390 million for the Coast Guard to buy additional patrol boats and aircraft for increased interdiction efforts around Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands; and \$40 million for additional Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) agents. The bill would authorize increased funding for Mexico, Colombia and other "source" countries to enhance drug eradication efforts, including \$70 million to upgrade helicopters used by Colombian national police and \$18 million for six high-altitude helicopters for opium eradication in Mexico. It also would require the Pentagon to station troops on the Mexican border to help the Border Patrol and Customs Service with interdiction efforts.

ANTI-DRUG PROGRAMS (HR4550)

The House passed a bill to authorize numerous drug prevention and treatment programs, including \$195 million annually through 2002 for an anti-drug media blitz; \$10 million for a Small Business Administration program to provide grants to nonprofit groups that help businesses implement drug-free workplace programs; \$50 million over two years for drug treatment for prison inmates and \$10 million annually through fiscal 2001 for programs designed to help parents keep children off drugs. The bill would require the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to establish a demonstration program under which several states would provide voluntary drug testing for all teenagers who apply for driver's licenses.

METHAMPHETAMINE SENTENCES (HR3898)

The House passed a measure to align penalties for methamphetamine, also known as "crank," with those for crack cocaine. The bill would reduce the amount of the drug needed to trigger mandatory minimum sentences: trafficking in 5 grams would carry a five-year minimum prison term, and distributing 50 grams would bring a mandatory 10-year sentence. It also would lower the threshold for imposing mandatory penalties involving smaller amounts of crank.

COMPUTER NETWORKING (HR3332)

The House passed legislation to expand the federal role in computer networking and authorize the Next Generation Internet. The bill would

authorize \$110 million in fiscal 1999 and \$115 million in 2000 for research to improve Internet capabilities.

MAMMOGRAPHY STANDARDS (HR4382)

The House passed a bill to reauthorize the 1992 Mammography Quality Standards Act (HR102-HR539), which expired last year, through 2002. The bill would require health care providers to notify women directly -- in plain, understandable terms -- of mammogram results rather than making them wait to hear from their doctors.

TORTURE VICTIMS (HR4309)

The House passed a measure to implement a domestic support network for torture victims. The bill calls on the president to use U.S. influence within the United Nations to improve services for victims overseas. It would double the U.S. contribution to the U.N. fund for torture victims, authorizing \$3 million in both fiscal 1999 and 2000. It also would authorize \$5 million in fiscal 1999 and \$7.5 million the following year in foreign assistance grants for countries that provide services for victims; authorize unspecified sums over the next two years for Health and Human Services grant funds for domestic treatment facilities; and require the State Department to train Foreign Service officers to identify, analyze and interact with victims of torture.

PARK FEES (HR2993)

The House passed a bill to allow national parks to collect fees for commercial filming of park lands or scenery for motion pictures, television programs, advertisements or other commercial productions.

OCEAN POLICY (HR3445)

The House passed legislation to authorize \$3 million over two years for a 16-member bipartisan panel to study oceanic environments; review policies and projects of numerous agencies and departments with jurisdiction over non-military oceanic policy and research; and, beginning in 1999, issue a biennial report outlining recommendations to Congress.

WOMEN IN HIGH TECHNOLOGY (HR3007)

The House passed a measure to establish a commission to study ways in which more women could be attracted to the fields of science, technology and engineering.

UNION 'SALTING' (S1 employers the right to refuse to hire union organizers seeking employment to promote unionization of the company.

CLINTON BEFORE CONGRESS

The House Judiciary Committee approved the release of the four-hour videotape and 2,800 pages of documents submitted by Independent Counsel Kenneth W. Starr, excepting 120 passages from the documents, most

containing personal information about people peripherally involved. The committee said some "redacted" portions contained "explicit sexual language and descriptions of sexual acts."

TAX CUT (HR4579)

The House Ways and Means Committee approved legislation to offer an \$80 billion net tax cut during the next five years. The cut would benefit middle-income households earning between \$40,000 and \$100,000, and save married couples \$28.1 billion over five years by giving them a standard deduction twice that of individuals -- a tax cut of about \$15 billion over five years. It would give businesses a 100 percent deduction of the health insurance premium for the self-employed (\$5.1 billion over five years); an estate tax exemption of \$1 million (\$17.9 billion); increased deductions for farmers and small businesses (\$1.1 billion), and a 20-month extension of the research tax credit (\$4 billion). It would also create tax incentives that would go to businesses in certain low-income neighborhoods (\$1 billion), and provide more bonding authority for school construction and other state and local government activities (\$2.5 billion).

AHEAD: A House floor vote is scheduled for this week.

JUSTICE DEPARTMENT REAUTHORIZATION (HR3303)

The Senate Judiciary Committee approved legislation to reauthorize the Justice Department for three years. The bill closely follows the

department's fiscal 1999 funding requests, and five percent increases are allowed for the fiscal years 2000 and 2001. The bill would reauthorize programs including border patrol, vehicle theft prevention, rural domestic violence, anti-terrorism and deportation proceeding initiatives, but would repeal open-ended authorizations of the National Institute of Corrections and U.S. Marshals Service.

LIABILITY FOR YEAR 2000 FIXES (S2392)

The Senate Judiciary Committee approved a measure to prevent the use in court of information provided by a company -- and labeled "Year 2000 readiness disclosure" statement -- as admission of liability. The bill would protect companies from liability for statements unless "clear and convincing evidence" shows the company made intentionally false statements.

INTERNET SEXUAL PREDATORS (HR3494)

The Senate Judiciary Committee approved a bill to increase penalties for sex offenders who use the Internet in a way that would lead to the exploitation or sexual abuse of a child. Any computer service provider who encountered someone using child pornography would be required to report any evidence to authorities. The bill would increase, from 10 years to 15 years, the penalty for taking a child across state lines for illegal sexual activity, and would double current penalties for repeat sex offenders.

INTERNET DOMAINS (S1727)

The Senate Judiciary Committee approved legislation to authorize \$800,000 for a study by the National Academy of Sciences of the effects on trademark rights of adding new generic Internet domain names. The academy would be directed to consider how to resolve trademark disputes over domain names. An interim report would be required within four months of enactment, with a final report due nine months after enactment.

BOUNTY HUNTERS (S1637)

The Senate Judiciary Committee approved a bill that would offer guidance to the Justice Department in publishing model guidelines for states concerning bounty hunters. States that follow the guidelines would get priority for federal crime-fighting grants.

YEAR 2000 PROBLEM (HR3412)

The Senate Small Business Committee approved a measure that would make small businesses struggling to update computer technology to cope with the Year 2000 problem eligible for up to \$50,000 in federal loans. The bill incorporates Senate measures relating to the Year 2000 problem (S2372) and women's business centers (S2407), and would direct the Small Business Administration to be more responsive to veterans' needs by establishing a 15-member advisory board. It would also authorize \$15 million each year through 2003 to fund a disaster mitigation pilot

program enabling small businesses to apply for loans to prepare and protect property against natural disasters.

DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE (HR1853)

The Senate Small Business Committee approved legislation to authorize \$10 million in fiscal 1999 and 2000 for grants to help keep small businesses free of drugs.

ANIMAS-LA PLATA WATER PROJECT (S1771)

The Senate Indian Affairs Committee approved a bill to require the federal government to build a water project that will divert 57,100 acre-feet of water annually to a 260,000 acre-foot man-made reservoir at an estimated cost of \$257 million.

MEDICARE ADVISORY COMMISSION (HR4377)

The House Ways and Means Committee approved a bill to increase membership on the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission from 15 to 17.

DEALS AND DISCOUNTS (HR3511)

The House Ways and Means Committee approved legislation to allow the secretary of Health and Human Services to approve special deals or discounts that medical providers might make available to patients. Providers have argued that anti-fraud provisions in the 1996 health

insurance portability law (PL 104-191) made it too risky to offer such discounts.

MEDICARE REIMBURSEMENT (HR4567)

The House Ways and Means Committee approved a measure to create a new interim Medicare reimbursement formula for home health care agencies until a prospective payment system is ready after 2000. The measure is aimed at softening the impact of Medicare home health care reimbursement limits imposed in last year's balanced-budget act (PL 105-33). The formula would increase the aggregate limit on costs per visit to 108 percent of regional costs and would raise the limit on costs per patient. For agencies whose costs are below national median, the per-patient limit would be raised by half of the difference between the agency's costs and the national median. Home health agencies created between 1994 and 1998 would get national median payment, while those created after Oct. 1 would have a limit based upon 75 percent of the national median.

AHEAD: House floor action scheduled for this week.

ALASKA LAND SWAP (HR4223)

The House Resources Committee approved a bill that would allow a native Alaskan tribe to swap approximately 2,000 acres inside its village for Forest Service lands of equal value nearby in order to create a watershed to protect its drinking-water supply.

FORENSIC COMPUTER SYSTEMS (S2022)

The House Judiciary Committee approved legislation to authorize \$250 million annually through 2003 to help states upgrade criminal forensics and communications systems.

WELFARE BENEFITS (HR4558)

The House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Resources approved a measure that would enable about 12,000 mostly poor, elderly immigrants to retain Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Medicaid benefits that were scheduled to be terminated Oct. 1. The bill covers those who have lived in the United States for many years but have lost documents needed to prove it. It also would extend permanently Self-Employment Assistance programs, which allow certain unemployed workers to receive unemployment insurance benefits as they start their own businesses, and exclude from SSI benefit calculations any cash award of less than \$2,000 made by tax-exempt organizations to children with life-threatening conditions.

AHEAD: House floor action is scheduled for this week.

INTERNET GAMBLING (HR4427)

The House Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime approved a measure that would prohibit some types of Internet gambling. Operators of those Internet sites could face fine and up to four years in prison while

Internet gamblers could face fines and a six-month prison term. The bill would allow law enforcement officials to order Internet service providers to shut down Internet gambling sites, but would allow information to be sent over the Internet that is used to assist in placing bets as long as information is sent and received in states or on Indian reservations where gambling is legal.

CRIME STATISTICS (S1976)

The House Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime approved a bill that would require the attorney general to conduct a study on nature and the incidence of crimes against individuals with developmental disabilities, and that the data on such crimes would be added to National Crime Victims Survey.

ANTI-CRIME GRANTS (HR804)

The House Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime approved legislation to prevent states that receive federal funding earmarked for new police officers from using those funds to hire administrative personnel.

OIL HEAT ALLIANCE (HR3610)

The House Commerce Subcommittee on Energy and Power approved a bill that would allow oil heating companies to conduct an industry-wide referendum on whether to create an alliance to conduct research, development and consumer-education activities. If the referendum is

successful, the alliance would be authorized to establish an oil heat check-off fee to the fund program. The bill also would allow the alliance, once a research program has been established, to assess and collect a mandatory fee from oil heat wholesale distributors. The fee -- based on the volume of oil heat sold and distributed -- would be capped at one-half of one cent per gallon.

ANTI-BRIBERY TREATY (HR4353)

The House Commerce Subcommittee on Finance and Hazardous Materials approved legislation to make U.S. law conform to a December 1997 Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development treaty by extending U.S. anti-bribery laws to non-U.S. citizens, foreign corporations and international organizations. It would make officials at two intergovernmental satellite organizations -- Intelsat and Inmarsat -- liable for accepting bribes to give unfair advantages to private companies competing for global mobile satellite services.

INTERNET PORNOGRAPHY (HR3783)

The House Commerce Subcommittee on Telecommunications, Trade and Consumer Protection approved legislation to require World Wide Web sites containing material "harmful to minors" use adult verification methods -- such as credit cards, access codes or personal identification numbers -- to keep minors off sites. Failure to make a good faith effort to do so would result in fines up to \$50,000 and six-month prison term.

NUTRIA ERADICATION (HR4337)

The House Resources Subcommittee on Fisheries Conservation, Wildlife and Oceans approved a measure to authorize \$2.9 million over three years for the Interior Department to administer a pilot program for the eradication of nutria -- semi-aquatic rodents -- that are destroying ecosystems in Maryland.

CROSS-BORDER CHILD ABDUCTION (HCONRES224)

The House adopted a resolution that urges the international community to cooperate with the United States in locating and retrieving children kidnapped in United States and taken overseas.

MEDICINAL MARIJUANA (HRES117)

The House adopted a resolution that opposes efforts to legalize marijuana for medicinal purposes "without valid scientific evidence." The resolution calls upon the attorney general, within 90 days of its enactment, to report the quantity of marijuana eradicated in the United States from 1992 through 1997 and the annual number of arrests and prosecutions for federal marijuana offenses.

SCIENCE COMMITTEE APPOINTMENT (HRES540)

The House adopted a resolution appointing Brad Sherman, D-Calif., to the Science Committee.

MEXICAN EXTRADITION (HRES381)

The House adopted a resolution that urges the president to renegotiate a 20-year-old extradition treaty between the United States and Mexico to include language that would not allow either country to refuse to extradite based upon the possibility that suspect could face capital punishment.

PUERTO RICO (SRES279)

The Senate adopted a resolution to express its support for the citizens of Puerto Rico and their decision to hold a Dec. 13 referendum on their political status. The House passed a bill (HR856) in March to give Puerto Ricans a chance to vote on three options: statehood, independence or some variant of commonwealth. A related bill (S472) awaits full Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee action.

CUBAN EXTRADITION (HCONRES254)

The House adopted a resolution that urges the Cuban government to extradite convicted killer Joanne Chesimard and 90 other criminals.

YUGOSLAV WAR CRIMES (HCONRES304)

The House adopted a resolution that calls for Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic to be declared a war criminal and urges the United

States to turn over information and evidence to indict him at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.

AFRICAN RADIO (HRES415)

The House adopted a resolution that urges the U.S. Information Agency to expand economic, political and human rights programming; and expresses support for the creation and operation of "Radio Democracy for Africa" under the aegis of the Voice of America

[LastWeek]

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CQ's WASHINGTON ALERT 09/21/98

APPROPRIATIONS: HOUSE SEEKS TO ATTACH FARM RELIEF TO APPROPRIATIONS BILL

Hill News Highlights

(NEWS 09/18/98; 34 lines)

Item Key: 15338

APPROPRIATIONS: HOUSE SEEKS TO ATTACH FARM RELIEF TO APPROPRIATIONS BILL

By Alan Greenblatt, CQ Staff Writer

House Republicans, responding to the worsening farm crisis,

yesterday unveiled a \$4 billion relief package that they plan to attach to the fiscal 1999 agriculture appropriations bill (HR4101).

Thad Cochran, R-Miss., chairman of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, said he could live with the package, although he suggested some details still needed to be ironed out. The Senate version (S2159) of the bill contains a \$500 million disaster indemnification package, which is now considered inadequate.

The House on Tuesday approved a non-binding instruction to appropriators to provide farmers struck by drought, disease and low prices with disaster relief on an "emergency," off-budget basis, using the House bill as a vehicle.

But it is not clear that appropriators will be able to push through a \$4 billion package without making offsetting cuts. The House resolution was opposed by budget hawks, who agreed that farmers were worthy of assistance but argued funding would better have been found by cutting other budget items.

"We're going to look for offsets if possible, but we understand that this is an emergency," said House Agriculture Chairman Bob Smith, R-Ore.

The proposed disaster relief package includes: a \$1.65 billion increase in crop support payments to farmers; \$1.5 billion to assist farmers and ranchers suffering heavy losses in 1998; \$675 million in assistance to producers suffering multi-year losses due to disease and

flooding in the Upper Midwest; and \$75 million for livestock feed assistance.

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CQ's WASHINGTON ALERT 09/21/98

COMMERCE: HOUSE BILL AIMS TO SCREEN ACCESS FROM ADULT WEB SITES

Hill News Highlights

(NEWS 09/18/98; 49 lines)

Item Key: 15339

COMMERCE: HOUSE BILL AIMS TO SCREEN ACCESS FROM ADULT WEB SITES

By Rebecca Adams, CQ Staff Writer

In the wake of criticism of the House's online release of explicit details contained in Independent Counsel Kenneth W. Starr's report on President Clinton, a House Commerce panel yesterday approved a bill aimed at cracking down on commercial adult Internet sites that do not block access to minors.

The bill (HR3783) would require web sites containing material "harmful to minors" to use an adult verification method -- such as a credit card, an access code or a personal identification number -- to keep minors off their sites. Failure to make a good faith effort to do

so could result in fines up to \$50,000 and a six-month prison term.

"I believe it is our responsibility to act to protect young people from the corrosive, debasing effects of the voluminous graphic adult content readily available on the World Wide Web," said sponsor Michael G. Oxley, R-Ohio.

The Telecommunications Subcommittee's markup came at an awkward time for some members: the House Judiciary Committee met yesterday to consider releasing Clinton's videotaped grand jury testimony. However, the panel reached no decision and scheduled another session this morning

The House voted last week (HRES525) to post Starr's 445-page report on its web site -- including graphic descriptions of Clinton's sexual relationship with Monica Lewinsky.

The report also was available on several government sites and dozens of commercial sites.

Ranking subcommittee Democrat Edward J. Markey, Mass., who voted against releasing the report, said there was "an irony" to the online publishing of Starr's material in light of the legislation. Oxley said the Starr report did not meet the "harmful to minors" standards and the House site does not qualify as a commercial one.

The measure would call on the Federal Communications Commission to meet every two years to determine which technological methods Web sites

could use to comply with the adult verification requirements.

The panel rejected, by voice vote, an amendment by Christopher Cox, R-Calif., that would have taken the agency out of the process.

The Senate incorporated the companion measure (S1482), sponsored by Daniel R. Coats, R-Ind., into its version of the fiscal 1999 Commerce, Justice, State spending bill (S2260).

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CQ's WASHINGTON ALERT 09/21/98

COMMERCE: PANEL APPROVES BILL TO LIMIT LIABILITY FOR YEAR 2000 FIXES

Hill News Highlights

(NEWS 09/18/98; 38 lines)

Item Key: 15359

----- COMMERCE: PANEL APPROVES BILL TO LIMIT LIABILITY FOR YEAR 2000 FIXES

By Juliana Gruenwald, CQ Staff Writer

The Senate Judiciary Committee yesterday approved compromise legislation to provide businesses with incentives to share information about fixing the Year 2000 computer problem.

By voice vote, the panel approved the substitute version of the bill (S2392) worked out between leaders of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

Clinton administration officials and industry representatives.

Many businesses have been reluctant to share information about repairing the Year 2000 computer glitch because they are wary of litigation. The problem stems from computers that will be unable distinguish between the years 1900 and 2000, which could cause systems to go malfunction or shut down.

The compromise legislation would prevent the use in court of information provided by a company -- and labeled "Year 2000 readiness disclosure" statement -- as an admission of liability. The measure also protects companies from being liable for false, misleading or inaccurate statements unless "clear and convincing evidence" shows a company made the statements knowing they were false.

Sen. Fred Thompson, R-Tenn., said he was concerned that the bill will allow those who make products or provide services to fix the problem to be "a little less careful" or to make untruthful statements about their competitors' products or services without fear of liability. The committee rejected, 4-12, a Thompson amendment to exempt such companies from the bill's protections. Chairman Orrin G. Hatch, R-Utah, said Thompson's amendment would "gut" the measure.

Supporters say the legislation will not clear Congress this year unless it moves through the Senate quickly and with little controversy. But Sen. Joseph R. Biden Jr., D-Del., who backed Thompson's amendment, said supporters may have difficulty gaining unanimous consent to

accomplish such quick action.

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CQ's WASHINGTON ALERT 09/21/98

SENATE FLOOR: CHAMBER MAKES SOME PROGRESS ON CONSUMER BANKRUPTCY BILL

Hill News Highlights

(NEWS 09/18/98; 60 lines)

Item Key: 15335

SENATE FLOOR: CHAMBER MAKES SOME PROGRESS ON CONSUMER BANKRUPTCY BILL

By Richard Sammon, CQ Staff Writer

The Senate posted a measure of progress on a consumer bankruptcy overhaul bill yesterday, acting on three amendments that relate to everyone who possesses a credit card or uses an automated teller machine (ATM).

The Senate voted 72-26 to table, or kill, an amendment by Banking Committee Chairman Alfonse M. D'Amato, R-N.Y., that would have prohibited banks from exacting a surcharge for use of their ATMs by folks who don't have accounts at the bank.

The average surcharge is \$1.25, D'Amato said, and the average family

pays \$200 a year in surcharges. The banking industry receives about \$3 billion from surcharges each year. "That used to be called usury," D'Amato said, adding that customers are forced to pay the surcharge because they do not have time to find an ATM that does not charge extra for a cash withdrawal.

While many voted against the popular consumer amendment, few members spoke against it. However, Jeff Sessions, R-Ala., said the loss in revenue to banks would be passed to consumers in higher loan rates.

Members also tabled, 58-40, an amendment by Christopher J. Dodd, D-Conn., that would have required credit card applicants under age 21 to have a parent or guardian sign the credit card application and be liable for uncollected debt.

The Senate agreed, by voice vote, to an amendment by Jack Reed, D-R.I., that would prohibit credit card companies from charging a fee or terminating an account solely because a customer routinely pays his or her balance in full, thereby failing to incur interest charges. Reed said some companies terminate such accounts because they are not profitable. "Should the most responsible people who pay off their balances right away be penalized?" he asked.

Opponents of Reed's amendment said it was inappropriate to force lending institutions to make credit available in ways that will not generate profit. An effort to table Reed's amendment was rejected, 47-52.

Senate leaders postponed until Tuesday a scheduled debate and vote on a Democratic-backed minimum wage amendment offered to the bankruptcy bill (S1301) because sponsor Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass., was at a meeting with President Clinton on managed care legislation. Republicans appear to have the votes to kill the amendment.

Last night, the Senate voted 89-0 for an amendment that would exempt from bankruptcy proceedings retirement funds held in Individual Retirement Accounts, including Roth IRAs. Currently, retirement funds are exempt if they are in 401(k) plans, but the increasingly popular IRAs are not exempt.

Supporters say the underlying consumer bankruptcy bill is needed to address a rate of bankruptcy filings that has increased sharply because it has become too easy to walk away from debts. The measure would require judges to consider a person's ability to repay at least some secured debts before erasing liabilities.

SENATE FLOOR: DIGITAL COPYRIGHT PROTECTION, TRADEMARK MEASURES PASSED

Hill News Highlights

(NEWS 09/18/98; 27 lines)

Item Key: 15337

SENATE FLOOR: DIGITAL COPYRIGHT PROTECTION, TRADEMARK MEASURES PASSED

By Richard Sammon, CQ Staff Writer

The Senate passed by voice vote last night a bill (HR2281) to update copyright protection for the digital age.

The legislation would protect digitally produced works, such as computer software and compact discs. The measure would put the United States in compliance with two treaties known as the 1996 World Intellectual Property Organization.

The Senate inserted the text of a related bill (S2037) and sent the measure to conference with the House.

The Senate also passed by voice vote a bill (S2193) to implement a treaty allowing registration and protection of 10-year, renewable trademarks.

NUTRITION PROGRAMS: The Senate passed by voice vote a bill (HR3874) to reauthorize through 2003 the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) nutrition and health program, which serves poor pregnant women and children up to age 5.

The program is set to expire on Sept. 30. The Senate inserted the

text of a similar measure (S2286) and requested a conference with the House, which passed the legislation in July.

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SENATE FLOOR: RESOLUTION EXPRESSES SUPPORT FOR PUERTO RICAN REFERENDUM

Hill News Highlights

(NEWS 09/18/98; 20 lines)

Item Key: 15336

SENATE FLOOR: RESOLUTION EXPRESSES SUPPORT FOR PUERTO RICAN REFERENDUM

By Richard Sammon, CQ Staff Writer

The Senate yesterday passed, by voice vote, a non-binding resolution (SRES279) expressing support for citizens of Puerto Rico and their decision to hold a Dec. 13 referendum on their political status.

The House narrowly passed a bill (HR856) in March that would give Puerto Ricans the chance to vote on three options: statehood, independence or some variant of the island's commonwealth status.

A related bill (S472) is awaiting action in the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, but snags appear to be threatening action

this year.

The resolution, while not having the force of law that the bills would, says Congress should carefully review the results of the December referendum that was called by Puerto Rico Gov. Pedro Rossello, who supports statehood.

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TAXING MATTERS TAKING THEIR PARTISAN TOLL

Hill News Highlights

(NEWS 09/18/98; 121 lines)

Item Key: 15332

TAXING MATTERS TAKING THEIR PARTISAN TOLL

By David Hosansky, CQ Staff Writer

This year's tax bill, swiftly crafted by the Republicans to be politically potent, may just as swiftly be turning politically poisonous.

Even before the package took its first step yesterday, President Clinton vowed unambiguously to veto it. In doing so, he served notice

that he is prepared to act much less politically hobbled by the furor over his affair with Monica Lewinsky than the GOP leadership of Congress may have been bargaining for.

The president's swift denunciation of the tax package also could have an important effect on the coming appropriations endgame. Without dissent, Congress yesterday quickly cleared a measure to keep the government running in place for the first nine days of fiscal 1999. But after that, Democrats warned, Clinton will need to steel himself for an even bigger test of political wills.

David R. Obey, Wis, the top Democrat on the House Appropriations Committee, accused the Republicans of making little effort to clear the regular roster of spending bills in order to force one grand showdown. He said he suspects that the GOP, convinced that Clinton has been weakened by his troubles, will throw everything into one big "take-it-or-leave-it" omnibus spending bill and "stick in his ear a whole range of propositions they know he is not ready to accept and we are not ready to accept."

Among the items that may yet be included, several top Republicans have suggested, is a tax package along the lines of the legislation (HR4579) that the House Ways and Means Committee approved yesterday on a 23-15 vote. Carefully calibrated for broad election-eve appeal, the bill includes tax relief for farmers, married couples, small businesses, people with savings accounts and students saving for private colleges -- at a cost of \$80 billion in the next five years.

But it would get the money mostly by reserving the expected surge of budget surpluses. And that is why the Democrats -- both at yesterday's markup and in powerful positions in the Senate -- are joining Clinton in lining up against it. The only member of the party to vote for it yesterday was Barbara B. Kennelly, who is running an uphill race for governor of Connecticut.

ELECTION ANGLES

"You know, we've been waiting 29 years for this. Couldn't we at least see the ink turn from red to black and then watch it dry for a minute or two before we get carried away?" Clinton told the the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers just before the markup began. "But it's election year, and it's popular. But it isn't right.

A few minutes later, Ways and Means Chairman Bill Archer, R-Texas, contended that the projected surplus of \$1.6 trillion during the next 10 years is so large that it could comfortably pay for the proposed tax cut without endangering government programs, including the much-discussed Social Security trust fund.

Asked after the markup about Clinton's veto threat, he said, "At this point, those are only words."

The bill is unusual because it focuses on Democratic priorities even though it was written by Republicans. It primarily would benefit

households earning between \$40,000 and \$100,000 a year, giving tax breaks to married couples, senior citizens, farmers and the self-employed. Schools and designated low-income communities also would get a boost.

Two parts of the bill are paid for without using the surplus: the extension of some tax breaks for big-businesses and a section accelerating planned increases on how much working Social Security recipients can earn before their benefits are cut. Together, the two measures cost about \$6.7 billion over five years and would likely not cause a veto.

But given Clinton's opposition and a cloudy future in the Senate, the overall tax cut package may ultimately serve as an issue in the fall congressional campaigns. Mindful of that, many Ways and Means Democrats endorsed the individual items in Archer's bill while still opposing it overall.

NUMBERS GAMES

In a sign that the legislation may be little more than veto bait, committee members did not try to add any tax breaks for favored constituencies.

Instead, the only substantial amendment was a Democratic proposal to delay most of the tax cuts until the Social Security trust fund is certified to be actuarially sound. It was offered by ranking Democrat

Charles B. Rangel, N.Y., and rejected 15-23 on a party-line vote.

"We shouldn't have tax laws that say, 'Here today, gone tomorrow,'" said Nancy Johnson, R-Conn.

Rather than debate the bill's tax provisions, which were lauded by all sides, members engaged in a heated exchange about whether tapping the surplus could undermine Social Security.

Democrats said projections of a \$1.6 trillion surplus were misleading, since about 98 percent of that money is collected from payroll taxes and will be needed for Social Security benefits in a few decades. Moreover, much of the surplus could evaporate if the economy enters a recession.

"You're actually spending money that you haven't got," Rangel said.

Republicans retorted that it would be ridiculous to sit on a \$1.6 trillion surplus and not give taxpayers a break. "If you have a surplus and you fail to return it to the American people, Washington spends it," said E. Clay Shaw Jr., R-Fla.

CREATING A RESERVE ACCOUNT

Trying to protect their political flank, Republicans also won approval of a bill (HR4578) that would steer 90 percent of the surplus into a Treasury reserve account until Congress acts to ensure the

long-term solvency of the Social Security trust fund. The bill passed by voice vote after the committee rejected, 15-22, a Rangel amendment that would have walled off 100 percent of the surplus.

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CQ's WASHINGTON ALERT 09/21/98

HOUSE FLOOR: FOREIGN OPERATIONS SPENDING BILL MEETS WITH APPROVAL

Hill News Highlights

(NEWS 09/18/98; 62 lines)

Item Key: 15334

HOUSE FLOOR: FOREIGN OPERATIONS SPENDING BILL MEETS WITH APPROVAL

By Bob Gravely, CQ Staff Writer

The House passed its \$12.5 billion bill to fund the foreign policy apparatus last night, but in a form that is certain to set up a showdown with the Clinton administration on a host of issues, most notably funding for the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and abortion-related restrictions on family planning assistance.

Although the IMF funding and the family planning aid are by far the most contentious parts of the bill (HR4569), the House spent remarkably little time debating those issues before voting 255-161 to pass the

bill.

The lack of action on those issues resulted from the rule GOP leaders crafted to structure floor consideration of the bill. The rule had been adopted earlier in the day on a 229-188 vote.

The rule did not give Democrats the protection they would have needed to offer an amendment to add \$14.5 billion in credit for the IMF to the \$3.5 billion already in the bill. Without the protection, the proposed amendment was exposed to being struck down for violating budget rules.

Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., offered the amendment anyway, which would have brought the IMF funding up to the full amount requested by the administration. But, as expected, Sonny Callahan, R-Ala., protested and the amendment was disallowed.

The other expected fight was about language in the bill to prohibit assistance to family planning groups that lobby on or otherwise advocate policies on abortion, even if they use their own money.

Under the rule, Pelosi could have offered an amendment to essentially remove the restrictions, but then Christopher H. Smith, R-N.J., would have been allowed to offer a secondary amendment to add the restrictions right back.

Pelosi never offered the Democratic amendment, so Smith never

offered the secondary amendment, leaving lawmakers in disbelief that the House had considered the appropriations bill without having the bitter fight about family planning that had become routine.

The Appropriations Committee's top Democrat, David R. Obey, Wis., said Pelosi's amendment never was offered because Smith's secondary amendment, which likely would have been adopted, was actually more objectionable to Smith's opponents on the issue than the restrictions already in the bill, and that they did not want to give Republicans "two kicks at the cat."

OTHER AMENDMENTS: Over the objections of Appropriations Committee Chairman Robert L. Livingston, R-La., the House voted 231-182 to remove a section of the bill that would have revamped U.S. policy toward Azerbaijan and lifted a six-year-old ban on direct foreign assistance to that country's government.

The House also rejected, 201-212, an attempt by Joseph P. Kennedy II, D-Mass., to bar any funds in the bill from going to the Army's School of the Americas, which trains Latin American military officers and has come under fire from Kennedy and others who say it has turned out several dictators.

FLOOR ACTION: GOP SENDS CLINTON BILL TO KEEP GOVERNMENT OPEN UNTIL OCT.

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Hill News Highlights

(NEWS 09/18/98; 54 lines)

Item Key: 15333

FLOOR ACTION: GOP SENDS CLINTON BILL TO KEEP GOVERNMENT OPEN UNTIL OCT.

9

By Bob Gravely, CQ Staff Writer

Congress voted without dissent yesterday to give itself nine extra days to enact fiscal 1999 appropriations legislation.

Before noon, the House voted 421-0 to pass the first continuing resolution (CR) of the year. Seven hours later, the Senate cleared the measure (HJRES128) on a voice vote without debate. Democrats said President Clinton was sure to sign it.

For the short term, that would assure that the government would stay open when fiscal 1999 begins in two weeks. It would suggest that neither side wants to tempt the consequences of allowing a federal shutdown despite budget clashes between the Republicans and Clinton.

The stopgap bill "is straightforward, and does not include any extraneous or controversial matters that might result in a government

shutdown," promised Appropriations Chairman Robert L. Livingston, R-La.

But for that to continue, David R. Obey, Wis., the ranking Appropriations Committee Democrat, said he expected additional short-term CRs to be needed after yesterday's measure lapses on Oct. 9, the longstanding target adjournment date.

Obey blamed the lack of an adopted congressional budget resolution, plus "external factors," for making it so difficult this year to enact the appropriations bills. He did not list what he thought those factors were, but presumably at the top are House deliberations on whether the president committed impeachable offenses in connection with his affair with Monica Lewinsky.

In any event, Obey reiterated Clinton's view that at least seven of next year's bills would be vetoed in their emerging forms, which include spending levels for domestic programs and conservative environmental, abortion and Census riders that the president has said he will not support. At the moment, just one of the 13 has been sent to Clinton -- military construction (HR4059), historically the least contentious one.

Livingston said that lawmakers were "getting there" on the appropriations front but that much work remains, particularly in finding offsets for a wide range of emergency spending sought by the White House and lawmakers, including relief for farmers, embassy security, defense readiness and the Year 2000 computer problem. The chairman said it is "still too early to tell" whether Congress would resort to a big omnibus

spending bill. But he blamed the impasse on the regular appropriations bills on Clinton, who Livingston said requested \$9 billion in spending above levels agreed to in last year's balanced-budget deal without proposing workable offsets.

"There's still a lot of work in front of us," Livingston said. "No one should think we can relax now."

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CQ's WASHINGTON ALERT 09/21/98

JUDICIARY PANEL FACING A BIG TASK AFTER RELEASE OF VIDEO

Afternoon News Highlights

(NEWS 09/21/98; 103 lines)

Item Key: 15368

JUDICIARY PANEL FACING A BIG TASK AFTER RELEASE OF VIDEO

By Elizabeth A. Palmer, CQ Staff Writer

The Capitol is braced for the release -- as early as today -- of new details of President Clinton's sexual encounters with former White House intern Monica Lewinsky.

After nearly 10 hours of debate over two days, a bitterly divided

House Judiciary Committee voted Friday to release a videotape and transcript of Clinton's Aug. 17 grand jury testimony, transcripts of Lewinsky's testimony, a description of the sexual activity she gave prosecutors and about 2,800 other pages submitted to the House by Independent Counsel Kenneth W. Starr. This is the heart of the evidence Starr boxed up and sent to the Capitol to support his conclusion that Clinton committed 11 potentially impeachable offenses as he attempted to conceal his affair with Lewinsky.

The material to be released is also expected to include a discussion of legal and evidentiary issues, background information on the Paula Jones sexual harassment lawsuit, and statements by other principal figures in the scandal including presidential secretary Betty Currie, Washington attorney Vernon E. Jordan and Secret Service officers.

REVIEW PROCESS CONTINUES

Practically as soon as the Clinton video is released -- and then broadcast around the word -- the Judiciary Committee is expected to reconvene to decide how much to release from the balance of the 18 boxes of Starr's material. Under a House-passed resolution (HRES525) the remaining evidence will become public one week from today unless the committee acts to withhold it.

Democratic lawmakers and the White House called the committee's review process partisan and unfair. "Instead of fairness, some Republicans want to rush the release of salacious material," said White

House spokesman Barry Toiv.

The committee said it voted to withhold 120 portions of the documents that contain irrelevant personal information or name people not directly involved in the scandal, or that were judged overly explicit in the description of sex acts. An attempt by Democratic members of the panel to exclude another 27 items was rejected.

The Judiciary Committee did its work behind closed doors, so that the exact nature of its action and the votes that produced it were unavailable until the information is released along with the documents and video.

Jerrold Nadler, D-N.Y., told reporters that committee aides had agreed to withhold three descriptions of an encounter between Clinton and Lewinsky that featured a cigar as a sexual prop. But Rep. Bob Barr, R-Ga., successfully offered a motion to make them public, Nadler said.

But other evidence of bipartisanship was hard to find. Angry committee Democrats streamed from the committee room Friday afternoon to decry the partisan nature of the review process.

"There are wholly different views between Democrats and Republicans about what is right and what is fair and what is constitutional," fumed Martin T. Meehan, D-Mass.

"I don't deny that there were lots of party-line votes," said

Judiciary Chairman Henry J. Hyde, R-Ill. "But there is a spirit of collegiality that will overcome it. I would say that the spirit of bipartisanship is almost flourishing."

BIGGER DECISIONS AHEAD

Although the Judiciary Committee has already tied itself in a partisan knot over preliminary procedural issues, its most important decisions lie ahead. It still must decide how it will conduct its review of Starr's findings to determine if a formal impeachment inquiry is warranted.

House Speaker Newt Gingrich, R-Ga., is scheduled to meet Wednesday with House Minority Leader Richard A. Gephardt, D-Mo., Majority Leader Dick Armey, Texas, Hyde and Judiciary Committee ranking Democrat John Conyers Jr., Mich., to discuss how the review of Starr's findings will proceed.

There is support among Republicans -- and some Democrats -- to authorize a formal impeachment inquiry before Congress adjourns for the year, which is expected in three or four weeks. That would require a vote of the Judiciary Committee, followed by a vote of the House.

"We won't rush to judgment and we won't refrain from judgment, and I think it's very important for us to do what the facts lead us to do," Gingrich said Friday after a speech to leaders of the Christian Coalition.

The House could vote this week on a privileged resolution introduced by Alcee L. Hastings, D-Fla., that would impeach Starr on grounds that he has violated his constitutional oath, committed numerous misdeeds and wasted money during his investigation of the president. Hastings, a former U.S. District Court judge, was impeached by the House and removed from office by the Senate in 1989 for perjury and conspiracy to accept a bribe.

Under House rules, the Speaker must decide within two days that the House is in session whether Hastings' resolution constitutes a point of privilege. The House could vote on the resolution, or a motion to table it, on Wednesday or Thursday.

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THE WEEK AT A GLANCE

Afternoon News Highlights

(NEWS 09/21/98; 35 lines)

Item Key: 15367

THE WEEK AT A GLANCE

By CQ Staff

HOUSE FLOOR: Rosh Hashana means a late start to the week, and the press of business has prompted GOP leaders to plan for the year's first Saturday session. The biggest expected votes are on the Republican tax cut (HR4579) and revival of fast-track trade procedures (HR2621). Votes also are planned on a measure (HR3736) to boost immigration by high-tech workers, the conference agreement on the defense authorization (HR3616) and the conference deal on the legislative branch spending bill (HR4112). (Convenes at 10 a.m. tomorrow; first vote after 5 p.m. Wednesday.)

SENATE FLOOR: Debate on the bankruptcy bill (S1301) resumes today. A vote on an amendment that would raise the minimum wage by \$1 is set for tomorrow. Senators then may take up the crossing-state-lines abortion bill (S1645) or the Interior appropriations measure (S2237), although either would be prime vehicles for Democratic bids to make mischief with their managed care, campaign finance or farm aid plans. (Convenes at noon today; first vote at 2:20 p.m. tomorrow.)

APPROPRIATIONS: Conferees are expected to work to cut deals on the spending bills for agriculture (HR4101), Treasury-Postal (HR4104), energy and water (HR4060) and defense (HR4103), but only the national security conference report may get before the House, and then only on Saturday.

HIGHER EDUCATION: Conferees are expected to finish their negotiations on legislation (HR6) to reauthorize higher education

programs.

AVIATION: A bipartisan Senate deal seems near that would allow passage of legislation (S2279) to fund airport construction and safety.

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WEEKEND NEWS PROGRAMS

Afternoon News Highlights

(NEWS 09/18/98; 38 lines)

Item Key: 15366

WEEKEND NEWS PROGRAMS

By CQ Staff

Scheduled guests and topics for selected weekend talk shows. Air times are for Washington, D.C., stations.

EVANS & NOVAK, HUNT & SHIELDS, CNN, Saturday at 5:30 p.m., Sunday at 10 a.m. GUEST: Rep. Robert L. Livingston, R-La. TOPIC: Release of Clinton's videotaped testimony.

CAPITAL GANG, CNN, Saturday at 7 p.m. GUEST: Rep. David Dreier,

R-Calif. TOPIC: The House Judiciary Committee's inquiry; congressional elections.

FOX NEWS SUNDAY, Sunday at 9 a.m. GUESTS: Rep. Maxine Waters, D-Calif.; Rep. James E. Rogan, R-Calif.; presidential aspirant Steve Forbes. TOPIC: The Clinton scandal and its impact on the presidency.

MEET THE PRESS, NBC, Sunday at 10:30 a.m. GUESTS: White House Deputy Chief of Staff John Podesta; Sen. John Kerry, D-Mass.; Sen. John Ashcroft, R-Mo.; Rep. Bob Barr, R-Ga.; Rep. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C.; Rep. Robert Wexler, D-Fla. TOPIC: Release of Clinton's testimony.

FACE THE NATION, CBS, Sunday at 11:30 a.m. GUESTS: White House senior adviser Rahm Emanuel; Sen. Olympia J. Snowe, R-Maine; House Majority Whip Tom DeLay, Texas; Rep. Zoe Lofgren, D-Calif. TOPIC: Release of Clinton's testimony.

THIS WEEK, ABC, Sunday at 11:30 a.m. GUEST: William McDaniel, attorney for Sidney Blumenthal. TOPIC: Accusations of a White House smear campaign against congressional Republicans.

LATE EDITION, CNN, Sunday at 5 p.m. GUEST: House Democratic Caucus Chairman Vic Fazio, Calif.; House Republican Conference Chairman John A. Boehner, Ohio; William Bennett, co-director of Empower America; former Attorney General Dick Thornburgh; former independent counsel Michael Zeldin. TOPIC: Partisanship and the House's Clinton inquiry.

ALTERATION OF MEDICARE HOME HEALTH CARE PAYMENTS STARTS TO MOVE

Afternoon News Highlights

(NEWS 09/18/98; 43 lines)

Item Key: 15365

ALTERATION OF MEDICARE HOME HEALTH CARE PAYMENTS STARTS TO MOVE

By Mary Agnes Carey, CQ Staff Writer

The House Ways and Means Committee today approved on voice vote legislation (HR4567) that would alter Medicare's interim home health care payment system.

The panel did not provide offsets for the \$1.4 billion cost over the next five years, but referred the bill to the Commerce Committee for its review and assistance in developing offsets. Rep. Pete Stark, D-Calif., offered several alternatives for funding but they were rejected, mostly along party lines.

The bill would change a provision in the 1997 budget law (PL 105-33) that set interim payment rates for home health care agencies until a permanent prospective payment system was created by Oct. 1, 1999. But

today Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA) Deputy Administrator Michael Hash told the Ways and Means panel this will now occur sometime after April 1, 2000, because the agency is focused on preparing to solve its Year 2000 computer problems.

Many home health agencies said they needed a more immediate fix because payments under the interim system are so low they are being driven out of business.

Chairman Bill Archer, R-Texas, criticized HCFA for not making specific recommendations on how to fix the interim system. Democrats, however, including Charles B. Rangel, N.Y. the ranking member of the minority party, said it was unfair to blame HCFA and that legislators -- rather than the administration -- should develop the solution.

OTHER BILLS: In other business, the committee approved by voice vote legislation (HR4377) to increase to 17 from 15 the number of members on the Medicare Payment Review Commission. The panel, which was created in last year's budget bill (PL 105-34), reports to Congress twice a year with advice and recommendations on policies affecting the Medicare program.

On another voice vote, the panel also approved a bill (HR3511) that would permit the Health and Human Services inspector general to approve special deals, discounts or programs that medical providers might make available to patients.

AGREEMENT ON DEFENSE BILL SETTLES GENDER TRAINING ISSUE

Afternoon News Highlights

(NEWS 09/18/98; 78 lines)

Item Key: 15364

AGREEMENT ON DEFENSE BILL SETTLES GENDER TRAINING ISSUE

By Julie Hirschfeld, CQ Staff Writer

Congressional negotiators announced agreement today on a \$270.5 billion defense authorization bill (HR3616) for fiscal 1999 that would keep men and women together in basic training and delay a contentious decision on the production of the nuclear material tritium.

The conference report could come before the full House and Senate next week.

Although it contains provisions the Clinton administration has objected to, a veto is unlikely, partly because of accumulating concern over the military's combat readiness.

Negotiators compromised on gender separation during basic training,

agreeing to house male and female recruits separately but effectively leaving it to the service chiefs to decide whether to train their own new inductees separately.

Negotiators did, however, include non-binding sense-of-the-House language declaring that the sexes should be separated during training. That statement mirrors the December recommendations of a blue-ribbon panel chaired by former Sen. Nancy Kassebaum-Baker, R-Kan. (1978-97), convened in response to mounting allegations of sexual misconduct within the ranks.

The deal provoked the ire of House National Security Committee member Roscoe G. Bartlett, R-Md., who had pressed all year for an outright ban on coeducational training. He immediately started circulating a letter this afternoon urging members to oppose the conference report on the floor.

"Remarkably, politically correct forces in conference completely ignored the will of the House and refused to implement the House provision on basic training," the letter states.

While the original House bill imposed total gender-separation and housing in separate buildings, the Senate version would have held off on any policy change until a congressional basic training commission submitted its report next January.

Reacting to recent reports that U.S. satellite exports to China have

helped the country develop its ballistic missile capability, conferees agreed to several changes in U.S. satellite export policy.

The conference report would strengthen technology transfer controls by forcing the president to get congressional approval before granting satellite export waivers to American companies. It would also ban exports of missile equipment or technology to China unless the president pledges that they will not undermine the U.S. space launch industry or bolster China's weapons capabilities.

The agreement would also switch jurisdiction for licensing U.S. satellites from the Commerce Department to the State Department, where it rested until President Clinton changed the policy in 1996.

On another issue that divided the chambers, Senate conferees capitulated to House members' decision to prevent the administration from using a commercial nuclear reactor to produce tritium, a substance that amplifies the explosive strength of nuclear weapons. While the Senate's defense bill would have allowed the Energy Department to use a commercial plant to produce the weapons isotope, the House solution that won out compelled the administration to stick with the 50-year-old separation between commercial and military nuclear production for at least a year.

The agreement provides \$482.6 million to buy seven more C-130 cargo planes -- manufactured by Lockheed Martin in Marietta, Ga. That is six more than the administration requested. Also included in the measure is

a \$50 million down payment on a new, technologically advanced helicopter carrier to be built by Lytton Industries in Pascagoula, Miss. -- the home town of Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, R-Miss. -- which will end up costing the Navy \$1.3 billion.

The conference report included the administration's \$1.9 billion emergency request for fiscal 1999 peacekeeping operations in Bosnia.

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HOUSE TO RELEASE CLINTON VIDEOTAPE, LEWINSKY DEPOSITION NEXT WEEK

Afternoon News Highlights

(NEWS 09/18/98; 96 lines)

Item Key: 15363

HOUSE TO RELEASE CLINTON VIDEOTAPE, LEWINSKY DEPOSITION NEXT WEEK

By Elizabeth A. Palmer, CQ Staff Writer

The Capitol braced itself anew today for the release of explicit details of President Clinton's sexual encounters with former White House intern Monica Lewinsky.

This afternoon, the Government Printing Office was cranking out

transcripts of the president's Aug. 17 grand jury testimony and other documents submitted to the House by Independent Counsel Kenneth W. Starr. The committee has not announced when the material will be distributed, although it will not be before Monday morning.

After nearly 10 hours of debate over two days, a bitterly divided House Judiciary Committee voted today to release the videotape and 2,800 pages of material Starr submitted to support his conclusion that Clinton committed 11 potentially impeachable offenses including perjury and obstruction of justice in an effort to conceal his relationship with Lewinsky. The documents to be released include Lewinsky's deposition describing her sexual activity with the president.

White House spokesman Barry Toiv called the committee's review process partisan and unfair. "Instead of fairness, some Republicans want to rush the release of salacious material, defying the finest traditions of the House of Representatives," he said.

Judiciary Chairman Henry J. Hyde, R-Ill., said that the committee will withhold 120 portions of the documents. An attempt by Democratic members of the panel to exclude another 27 items was rejected. The portions withheld, according to committee members, contained personal information including names or telephone numbers of people not directly involved in the scandal. But the Judiciary meeting on the matter was closed, so the precise nature of the debate -- and the votes that resulted from it -- were not immediately available.

Some of the portions withheld contain sexually explicit material, and panel member Lamar Smith, R-Texas, said that committee members withheld such material unless "it went to substantiating allegations in the Starr report."

Jerrold Nadler, D-N.Y., told reporters that committee aides had agreed to withhold three descriptions of an encounter between Clinton and Lewinsky that featured a cigar as a sexual prop. But Rep. Bob Barr, R-Ga., successfully offered a motion to make them public, Nadler said.

The committee, according to Nadler's account, also rejected on a bipartisan vote an attempt by Bob Inglis, R-S.C., to change the panel's description of a withheld portion of Lewinsky's testimony to "oral-anal sex."

But other evidence of bipartisanship was hard to find. Angry committee Democrats streamed from the committee room this afternoon to decry the partisan nature of the review process.

"There are wholly different views between Democrats and Republicans about what is right and what is fair and what is constitutional," fumed Martin T. Meehan, D-Mass.

"I don't deny that there were lots of party-line votes," Hyde responded. "But there is a spirit of collegiality that will overcome it," he added. "I would say that the spirit of bipartisanship is almost flourishing."

BATTLE CONTINUES NEXT WEEK: House Minority Leader Richard A. Gephardt, Mo., is scheduled to meet Wednesday with Speaker Newt Gingrich, Ga., Majority Leader Dick Armey, Texas, Hyde and the Judiciary Committee's ranking Democrat, John Conyers Jr., Mich., to discuss how the review of Starr's findings will proceed. "I still hold out hope that the Speaker will do more to ensure that fairness and bipartisanship will be the guiding principles of this inquiry," Gephardt said in a statement.

But more partisan rancor is likely next week. The Judiciary Committee is expected to reconvene to decide what to release from boxloads of remaining Starr material. The evidence will automatically become public a week from Monday unless the committee votes to withhold the information.

There is support among Republicans -- and some Democrats -- to authorize a formal impeachment inquiry before Congress adjourns for the year in October. That would require a vote of the Judiciary Committee, followed by a vote of the full House.

The House may also vote next week on a privileged resolution by Alcee L. Hastings, D-Fla., that would impeach Starr on the grounds that he has violated his constitutional oath, committed numerous misdeeds and wasted money during his investigation of the president. Hastings, a former U.S. District Court judge, was impeached by the House and removed from office by the Senate in 1989 for perjury and conspiracy to accept a

bribe.

Under House rules, the Speaker must decide within the next two days that the House is in session whether Hastings' resolution constitutes a point of privilege. The House could vote on the resolution, or a motion to table it, on Wednesday or Thursday.

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\$2.3 BILLION LEGISLATIVE BRANCH SPENDING DEAL SET; NO NEW VISITORS' CENTER

Afternoon News Highlights

(NEWS 09/18/98; 52 lines)

Item Key: 15362

\$2.3 LEGISLATIVE BRANCH SPENDING DEAL SET; NO NEW VISITORS' CENTER

By Rebecca Adams, CQ Staff Writer

House-Senate conferees today reached agreement on a compromise legislative branch appropriations bill (HR4112) that would provide about \$2.3 billion for fiscal 1999 -- an increase of about \$20 million, or less than 1 percent, over the allocation for the year that ends Sept.

The bill provides \$76.8 million for the Capitol Police, including additional pay for officers who work Sundays, holidays and at night. Lawmakers agreed to those differentials, long sought by the police, in the wake of the July 24 Capitol shooting deaths of two officers.

But the deal does not include additional security improvements, including the construction of a visitors' center, that have been requested by the police and the Architect of the Capitol. That funding will likely be considered in a supplemental "emergency" funding bill that could move before the end of the 105th Congress.

Funding to fix the Year 2000 problem in General Accounting Office computers was addressed in a compromise decision to fund no more than 50 new employees. Senate Appropriations Chairman Ted Stevens, R-Alaska, made a brief appearance to press for the funding. House members had suggested funding only 25 employees, with a preference for hiring them on a temporary contract basis.

"I urge you not to skimp on this," Stevens said. "They need the money, and they need it now."

Both Stevens and Rep. James T. Walsh, R-N.Y., the chairman of the Legislative Branch Appropriations Subcommittee, said they expect a supplemental request next year for more Y2K funding.

The Senate agreed to a \$1 million House request for the

congressional cemetery near the Anacostia River, where 92 members of Congress are buried. Matching private funds would be added for the cemetery, which has fallen into disrepair in recent years.

Conferees dropped \$2 million for a one-year commission to study and report on the trade deficit. House Ways and Means Chairman Bill Archer, R-Texas, had criticized the creation of the panel, saying that the Ways and Means Trade Subcommittee as well as the Senate Finance International Trade Subcommittee already provide all necessary information on the trade deficit.

Members also rejected a request by Jose E. Serrano, D-N.Y., to allow the Mariana Islands to send a non-voting delegate to Congress. The move was defeated not on its merits but because members said that a last-minute decision by a conference committee would not allow for a full House debate.

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TODAY AT A GLANCE

Afternoon News Highlights

(NEWS 09/18/98; 32 lines)

Item Key: 15331

TODAY AT A GLANCE

By CQ Staff

HOUSE FLOOR: Debate will resume on a bill (HR3248) that would turn 31 federal education programs costing \$2.7 billion annually, including Goals 2000 and the Technology Literacy Challenge Fund, into block grants to the states. Ninety-five percent of the money would have to go directly to local school systems. (Convenes at 9 a.m.; votes possible throughout the day.)

SENATE FLOOR: A vote is scheduled on overriding President Clinton's veto of a bill (HR1122) that would outlaw in most instances a procedure that opponents label "partial-birth" abortion. Next up will be a bill (S1645) that would make it a federal crime to transport a minor across state lines for an abortion, bypassing parental consent laws. (Convenes at 8:30 a.m, first vote at 9:30 a.m.)

APPROPRIATIONS: Conferees will meet on the fiscal 1999 legislative branch appropriations bill (HR4112).

CLINTON VIDEOTAPE: House Judiciary reconvenes to continue debating whether and when to release material including President Clinton's videotaped grand jury testimony submitted by Independent Counsel Kenneth W. Starr. None of the material is expected to be released today.

IMMIGRANT WELFARE: House Ways and Means will mark up four bills,

including one (HR4558) that would allow an estimated 12,000 mostly low-income, elderly immigrants to retain federal benefits that are scheduled to be terminated Oct. 1, and another (HR4567) that would revise Medicare reimbursements for home health care.

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MIDDAY UPDATE

Afternoon News Highlights

(NEWS 09/18/98; 138 lines)

Item Key: 15361

MIDDAY UPDATE

By CQ Staff

PANEL VOTES RELEASE OF CLINTON VIDEO, SOME STARR DOCUMENTS:

Americans will see and hear how President Clinton described his relationship with Monica Lewinsky when he testified last month before a federal grand jury. After nine hours of discussion behind closed doors over two days, the House Judiciary Committee voted today to release the four-hour videotape and 2,800 pages of documents submitted by Independent Counsel Kenneth W. Starr. Committee members were unable to

say when the material will be reproduced and made public. Chairman Henry J. Hyde, R-Ill., said the decision to release the material was bipartisan, but committee Democrats took strong exception and the White House quickly denounced it as an attempt to embarrass Clinton. The panel voted to delete 120 passages from the documents it will release, most containing personal information about people peripherally involved. The committee said some of the "redacted" portions contained "explicit sexual language and descriptions of sexual acts."

AGREEMENT ON DEFENSE BILL SETTLES SATELLITE EXPORT ISSUE:

House and Senate conferees announced today an agreement on a \$270.5 billion fiscal 1999 defense authorization bill (HR3616). Reacting to recent reports that U.S. satellite exports to China have helped the country develop its ballistic missile capability, conferees agreed to several changes in U.S. satellite export policy. The conference report would strengthen technology transfer controls by forcing the president to get congressional approval before granting satellite export waivers to American companies. Negotiators also compromised on gender separation during basic training, agreeing to house male and female recruits separately but effectively leaving the question of whether to train them separately for the service chiefs. Conferees approved non-binding sense-of-Congress language that the sexes should be separated during training.

CONGRESS SUSTAINS VETO OF 'PARTIAL BIRTH' ABORTION MEASURE:

The Senate fell three votes short today of overriding President Clinton's veto of legislation (HR1122) that describes "partial birth" abortions and would outlaw them except to save the life of the woman. The 64-36 vote was identical to the roll call when the Senate first passed the bill; 51 Republicans and 13 Democrats voted "yes," while four Republicans and 32 Democrats voted "no." "We came up short and we expected that would be the case," said sponsor Rick Santorum, R-Pa. "Will we be back with another attempt? Of course, next year. That's how the place works. It takes persistence." Senate Republicans then filed a cloture petition designed to force quick action on legislation (S1645) making it a federal crime to bypass parental consent and notification laws and transport a minor across state lines for an abortion. A vote on cloture is expected Tuesday.

HOUSE PASSES EDUCATION BLOCK GRANT BILL:

In its only legislative business, the House by 212-198 today passed a bill (HR3248) to turn \$2.7 billion in federal education programs into block grants to the states and require that 95 percent of the money go directly to local school districts. Lawmakers rejected, 190-215, a Democratic substitute that would have replaced the block grants with many of President Clinton's education initiatives, including funding authorization to hire more elementary school teachers and build and renovate school buildings. The block-grant bill is a centerpiece of the GOP education agenda; proponents said it would give local officials more flexibility to use federal education dollars. "What we take away is one size fits all," said Education and the Workforce Committee Chairman Bill

Goodling, R-Pa. Democrats said the bill would remove the guarantees that federal money will be used for purposes intended by Congress.

CONFEREES FINISHING UP LEGISLATIVE BRANCH SPENDING AGREEMENT:

House and Senate negotiators today are putting the finishing touches on a conference agreement on the fiscal 1999 legislative branch appropriations bill (HR4112). As of early this afternoon, they were still negotiating a salary increase for the Capitol Police. But the bill does not include approximately \$500 million in security improvements that have been requested by the police and the Architect of the Capitol. That funding will likely be considered in a supplemental funding bill. The bill would authorize \$2 million for a one-year commission to study and report on the trade deficit. In a surprise move, Jose E. Serrano, D-N.Y., asked to allow the Mariana Islands a non-voting delegate to the House. That move was defeated; members said that a last-minute decision by a conference committee did not allow for the needed full House debate.

GOP FIX TO MEDICARE HOME HEALTH CARE PAYMENTS ADVANCES:

Legislation that would alter Medicare's interim home health care payment system was approved today on a voice vote by the House Ways and Means Committee. The panel did not provide offsets for the \$1.4 billion cost in the next five years, but referred the bill (HR4567) to the Commerce Committee for its review and assistance in developing offsets. The bill would change a provision in the 1997 budget law (PL 105-33)

that set payment rates for home health care agencies until a permanent prospective payment system was created. But many home health agencies say their payments are so low they are being driven out of business.

Chairman Bill Archer, R-Texas, said the Health Care Financing Administration has not done enough to fix that problem. Democrats said that is up to Congress, not the Clinton administration.

POLITICAL CLIPPINGS:

The DALLAS MORNING NEWS reports that Cherie Soskin, the woman with whom House Judiciary Chairman Henry J. Hyde, R-Ill., had an affair years ago, says she does not believe he "is morally fit to judge President Clinton." Soskin, whose name was Snodgrass in the 1960s, objected to Hyde's characterization of their relationship as a "youthful indiscretion, saying, "He wasn't so youthful. He was 37 or 38. ... It never occurred to me he was married. I never even thought to ask."

The KANSAS CITY STAR reports that state Attorney General Jay Nixon, the Democratic candidate for the Senate, "has signed an unusual affidavit that says he has been sexually faithful to his wife." GOP Sen. Christopher S. Bond, divorced since 1995, "does not plan to sign" any such affidavit, according to his campaign manager, who called it a "sleazy political stunt."

The SEATTLE TIMES reports that both Rep. Jack Metcalf, R-Wash., and Democratic challenger Grethe Cammermeyer have signed "a code of campaign conduct, promising to not villify or defame each other." In effect, the

paper said, that means Metcalf's campaign "won't make Cammermeyer's lesbianism an issue, and Cammermeyer won't allow her supporters to harp on Metcalf's age." He is 70.

NOTED & QUOTED:

No. 1: "What the committee has done is simply turn itself into a transmission belt for attacks on the president, and nothing else. And sadly, they have so politicized this process that we're a lot worse off as a nation than we were a couple weeks ago."

-- Rep. Barney FRANK, D-Mass., objecting to today's decision to make public President Clinton's grand jury testimony and most documents submitted to the House by Independent Counsel Kenneth W. Starr.

No. 2: One year ago today, the House adopted a measure (HRES168) to revamp its internal ethics procedures so that outside groups could no longer initiate complaints against lawmakers.

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CONGRESS SUSTAINS VETO OF BILL TO BAN METHOD OF LATE ABORTION

Afternoon News Highlights

(NEWS 09/18/98; 59 lines)

Item Key: 15360

CONGRESS SUSTAINS VETO OF BILL TO BAN METHOD OF LATE ABORTION

By Richard Sammon, CQ Staff Writer

The Senate fell three votes short today of overriding president Clinton's veto of legislation (HR1122) that describes "partial birth" abortions and would outlaw them in almost all circumstances.

The 64-36 vote was anticlimactic in that it was identical to the roll-call when the Senate first passed the bill; 51 Republicans and 13 Democrats voted "yes," while four Republicans and 32 Democrats voted "no."

"We came up short and we expected that would be the case," said sponsor Rick Santorum, R-Pa. "Will we be back with another attempt of course, next year. That's how the place works. It takes persistence."

Sen. Barbara Boxer, D-Calif., the lead opponent of the bill, said the Senate "voted not to allow politicians into the doctor's office."

The House voted to override the veto in July, but prospects for an override in the Senate were always in doubt.

The legislation would ban in most cases a specific type of late-term abortion procedure that critics call "partial-birth" abortion. Clinton

vetoed it, saying it did not contain adequate protection for women whose health would be endangered if the procedure were not performed. The measure would allow the procedure to save a woman's life, but does not provide a similar exception to protect her health. Bill supporters say that exception would gut the bill.

AGAINST THE GRAIN:

The Democrats voting in favor of enacting the law despite the veto were Joseph R. Biden, Jr., Del.; John B. Breaux, La.; Robert C. Byrd, W.Va.; Kent Conrad, N.D.; Tom Daschle, S.D.; Byron L. Dorgan, N.D.; Wendell H. Ford, Ky.; Ernest F. Hollings, S.C.; Tim Johnson, S.D.; Mary L. Landrieu, La.; Patrick J. Leahy, Vt.; Daniel Patrick Moynihan, N.Y.; and Harry Reid, Nev.

The Republicans voting to sustain the veto were John H. Chafee, R.I.; Susan Collins, Maine; James M. Jeffords, Vt.; and Olympia J. Snowe, Maine.

NEXT UP, PARENTAL NOTICE: As soon as the vote was over, Senate Republicans filed a cloture petition on legislation (S1645) that would make it a federal crime to bypass parental consent and notification laws and transport a minor across state lines for an abortion. A vote on cloture is expected Tuesday.

The Senate voted, 97-0, last Friday to proceed to the bill. But work was delayed for a number of reasons. Many Democrats support the aim of

the bill but want an agreement to allow up-or- down votes on amendments sought by Clinton. The bill is nearly identical to a House measure (HR3682) passed July 16. The White House wants amendments to exempt a girl's family members, such as grandmothers, from prosecution and to require the attorney general to certify that a case involved a significant federal public interest before prosecution could occur.

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SOYBEAN FARMERS SEEK ENERGY BOOST FROM AG SPENDING BILL

Pulse of Congress/Insight

(NEWS 09/21/98; 45 lines)

Item Key: 15374

SOYBEAN FARMERS SEEK ENERGY BOOST FROM AG SPENDING BILL

By Matthew Tully, CQ Staff Writer

Looking everywhere they can for ways to address the worst farm crisis in a decade, soybean farmers say the key to boosting their crop prices may be a change in energy law. While such a change has made significant progress in both chambers, jurisdictional and environmental concerns could block the way.

The farmers want to amend a 1992 law (PL 102-486) that called on federal and state governments to reduce their dependence on foreign oil by turning in part to alternative fuels. Their proposal would make soybean-based diesel fuel, made up of about 20 percent soybean oil, a fuel eligible under the 1992 act.

Advocates say the initiative would increase demand for soybeans and boost prices by as much as 11 cents per bushel. "Multiply that by 2.7 billion bushels [per year]," said American Soybean Association spokesman Bob Callanan, "and you see why this is so important."

The Senate included the plan in its version of the Agriculture spending bill (HR4101), now headed to conference. The House Commerce Committee included compromise language, which would give fleet managers credit only for the portion of the fuel derived from soybeans, in an omnibus energy bill (HR4017).

Supporters in both chambers say the House language appears to have the best chance of passage.

The National Farmers Union is hoping to convince conferees on the spending bill to deal with the issue. But the House Commerce Committee is guarding its jurisdiction, aides say, and has told the appropriations staff not to do so -- at least not yet.

"It is one of many things the Senate included that are not in our

jurisdiction," said House Agriculture Appropriations aide John Ziolkowski.

That could spell trouble. Senate Energy Committee aides say they may not have time to consider the House Commerce bill. Moreover, environmentalists such as Rep. Henry Waxman, D-Calif., are arguing that the initiative is not in the spirit of the 1992 law, as soybean-based fuel still relies on an 80 percent mix of diesel fuel and is not as clean as natural gas.

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COBURN KEEPS FIGHTING TO FORCE VOTE ON LABOR-HHS MEASURE

Pulse of Congress/Insight

(NEWS 09/21/98; 41 lines)

Item Key: 15373

COBURN KEEPS FIGHTING TO FORCE VOTE ON LABOR-HHS MEASURE

By Sue Kirchhoff, CQ Staff Writer

Given time constraints and an overabundance of controversial provisions, House Republicans have all but abandoned efforts to bring the fiscal 1999 Labor, Health and Human Services spending bill (HR4274)

to the floor as a freestanding measure. All except Tom Coburn, R-Okla., that is.

Despite a widespread consensus that the bill will be folded into an omnibus measure, Coburn is still trying to corral the needed votes for a rule to allow debate on Labor-HHS.

Conservatives prevailed upon the House leadership this year to craft a measure geared to their priorities. If they cannot even muster the votes to bring the bill to the floor, however, their approach will be a hard sell next time around.

"It [the conservative position] will be less effective if we can't get this to the floor," Coburn conceded. "It's coming to the floor, and we're going to win the rule."

To find the votes for the rule, appropriators have already signaled they are willing to add money for summer jobs for poor youths and for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, both zeroed out in the committee's bill.

But a sticking point is a provision that would require parental notification before minors could get birth control from a federally funded family planning clinic. Conservatives want a straight up-or-down vote to put lawmakers on the record. Opponents want to be able to offer a compromise.

Coburn estimates that 20 Republicans would vote against his preferred rule, making it necessary for him to find Democratic supporters.

"We're not going to budge," Coburn said. "If you don't believe parents ought to be involved in these decisions, you better stand up and say that."

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HOUSE, SENATE GOP LEADERS JOCKEY ON FAST-TRACK VOTE

Pulse of Congress/Insight

(NEWS 09/21/98; 34 lines)

Item Key: 15372

HOUSE, SENATE GOP LEADERS JOCKEY ON FAST-TRACK VOTE

By Matthew Tully, CQ Staff Writer

House and Senate Republicans are standing at the fast-track door, not yet sure who should walk through first. The House appears to be the obvious choice -- a long-scheduled vote on the bill (HR2621) is still set for this week -- but its leaders have been quietly urging the Senate to act first.

"We've talked with the House people, and they would like us to do that," Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, R-Miss., said last week.

Unless House leaders postpone their scheduled vote, however, Lott says that chamber will have to go first. Senate Finance Chairman Bill Roth, R-Del., sponsor of an omnibus trade package (HR1432) containing fast-track language, has said he will not be ready to bring the bill to the floor until next week, Lott said.

Roth said he expects the Senate to act a few days after the House.

Although House Majority Leader Dick Armey, R-Texas, insists the vote will be this week, Speaker Newt Gingrich, R-Ga., has left open the possibility of a delay.

Some in the House believe a positive Senate vote would create momentum for fast track. But lobbyists say a Senate-first approach could have its own problems. Bill Morley, congressional affairs director for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, said that with President Clinton opposed to a vote so close to the elections, Democrats might vote against cloture.

"Politics is coming into play," Morley said. "We're worried about losing Democrats."

PEOPLE: LOBBYISTS AND ADVOCATES

People on the Move

(NEWS 09/21/98; 17 lines)

Item Key: 15371

PEOPLE: LOBBYISTS AND ADVOCATES

By Caroline E. Brown, CQ Staff Writer

Nick Yaksich has been named vice president of government affairs for the Construction Industry Manufacturers Association (CIMA), an international trade group. He will also head the Washington branch office of CIMA, which represents the interests of construction equipment manufacturers. Yaksich formerly served as vice president of governmental affairs for the National Asphalt Pavement Association. Yaksich replaces Bill Peterson, who has retired after 15 years at CIMA.

Dalita Harmon is the new director of marketing communications at The Aker Partners, a Washington-based communication and marketing firm. She most recently served as executive producer of Heart and Hand Productions, a film production company that provides video for television magazine shows.

PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

People on the Move

(NEWS 09/21/98; 26 lines)

Item Key: 15370

PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

By Caroline E. Brown, CQ Staff Writer

Michael Myers is the new minority staff director at the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee.

Before that he was for two years the Democratic staff director to the Senate Judiciary Immigration Subcommittee. In the seven years prior to that, Myers was counsel to the subcommittee. He was previously the Washington representative for Church World Service, an international relief, refugee, and development agency of the National Council of Churches.

Myers replaces William Dauster, now issues director for the presidential exploratory committee of Sen. Paul Wellstone, D-Minn.

Nicole Dueffert is the new press secretary to Rep. Marion Berry, D-Ark. Dueffert was a press assistant to Sen. Richard H. Bryan, D-Nev., for four years. She replaces Lisa Turner, who has moved to Arkansas to work for the Pocahontas Star-Herald newspaper.

Khris Bershers has been selected as the new press secretary to Rep. Mark Sanford, R-S.C. Since December, she has been a media relations associate at the National League of Cities. Bershers was previously press secretary to Rep. Helen Chenoweth, R-Idaho.

There are no more items to read.

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HOUSE FLOOR Sept. 21

Senate/House floor

* Tentative *

(SCHEDULE 09/21/98; House Floor)

Item Key: 166

HOUSE FLOOR * Tentative *

Sept. 21

NOT IN SESSION.

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CQ's WASHINGTON ALERT 09/21/98

SENATE FLOOR Sept. 21

Senate/House floor

* Tentative *

(SCHEDULE 09/21/98; Senate Floor)

Item Key: 171

SENATE FLOOR * Tentative *

Sept. 21

CONVENES AT 2PM.

S1301 A bill to amend title 11, U.S. Code, to provide for consumer
bankruptcy protection, and for other purposes. -- CONTINUE
CONSIDERATION.

NOTE: No votes scheduled Monday.

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CQ's WASHINGTON ALERT 09/21/98

HISPANIC CAUCUS MEETING

Other news events

* New *

(SCHEDULE 09/21/98)

Item Key: 33

HISPANIC CAUCUS MEETING * New *

The Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute will hold its 1998 issues
conference, "Distinct Paths, Converging Voice." First of two days.

Sept. 21 8:45 am Washington Hilton, 1919 Connecticut Ave. NW,

International Ballroom

Contact: Erika de la Hoz at 202-543-1771

Highlights:

8:45am: Roberto Suro of The Washington Post and CNNs Maria Hinojosa participate in a panel discussion on Latinos in the 21st century. Cannon building, caucus room.

10am:

Rep. Esteban Torres, D-Calif.. and Linda Chavez-Thompson, executive vice president of the AFL-CIO, participate in a panel discussion on labor unions. Longworth Building, Room 1300

10am:

John Taylor, CEO and president of the National Community Reinvestment Coalition, participates in a panel discussion on financial services in the Latino community. Longworth Building, Room 1539

1:45pm:

Patricia Harrison, co-chair of the Republican National Committee, and Roy Romer, general chairman of the Democratic National Committee, participate in a panel discussion on "Wooing the Latino Vote." Cannon Building, Caucus Room

3:45pm:

Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard, D-Calif., James Holmes, acting director of the U.S. Bureau of the Census, and Arturo

Vargas, executive director of the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials, participate in a panel discussion on the Year 2000 Census.

3:45pm:

Rep. Ruben Hinojosa, D-Texas, and Ron Unz, chairman of English for the Children, participate in a panel discussion on bilingual education. Longworth Building, Room 1539

Information verified as of 06:59pm 09/18/98

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CQ's WASHINGTON ALERT 09/21/98

SOCIAL POLICY: ABORTION NOTIFICATION

Schedule highlights

(SCHEDULE 09/21/98)

Item Key: 25

SOCIAL POLICY: ABORTION NOTIFICATION

By Richard Sammon, CQ Staff Writer

The Senate may turn to legislation (S1645) tomorrow that would make it a federal crime to bypass parental consent and notification laws and

transport a minor across state lines for an abortion, but some differences over the measure's language could pose some problems.

The Senate voted, 97-0, on Sept. 11 to proceed to the bill. Many Democrats support the measure's aim but want an agreement to allow up-or-down votes on amendments sought by President Clinton. Democrats may oppose efforts to end debate on the bill itself unless those changes are made.

The White House wants amendments to exempt a girl's family members, such as grandmothers, from prosecution and to require the attorney general to certify that a case involved a significant federal public interest before prosecution could occur. Republicans say that language would establish too many loopholes.

Also complicating efforts to pass the bill is the Democrats' intention to offer managed care legislation (S1890) as an amendment to any available measure that Majority Leader Trent Lott, Miss., may choose to turn to.

The Senate may vote on invoking cloture on the bill tomorrow. If no agreement is reached on managed care legislation or on related amendments to the bill, Democrats may vote to invoke cloture, which requires 60 votes.

The bill is nearly identical to a House measure (HR3682) that passed July 16.

[ThisWeek]

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CQ's WASHINGTON ALERT 09/21/98

SOCIAL POLICY: EDUCATION REAUTHORIZATION

Schedule highlights

(SCHEDULE 09/21/98)

Item Key: 26

SOCIAL POLICY: EDUCATION REAUTHORIZATION

By Bob Gravely, CQ Staff Writer

If House and Senate negotiators can agree on the last few sticking points, the conference report on the higher education reauthorization bill (HR6) could see action on the House floor this week.

Both chambers passed the legislation by wide margins, but negotiators last week were trying to reach final agreement on provisions to provide lower interest rates on student loans while providing hundreds of millions in special subsidies to commercial banks as an incentive to remain in the college lending market.