

Legislative Bulletin.....February 25, 2004

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Summary of the Bills Under Consideration Today:

Total Number of New Government Programs: 0

Year to Date Prior to Today's Bills: 6

Total Cost of Discretionary Authorizations: 0

*Year to Date Prior to Today's Bills: \$10.291 billion over five years**

Total Amount of Revenue Reductions: 0

Year to Date Prior to Today's Bills: \$304 million over five years

Total Change in Mandatory Spending: Increases \$19 million over five years

*Year to Date Prior to Today's Bills: -\$277 million over five years**

Total New State & Local Government Mandates: 0

Year to Date Prior to Today's Bills: 2

Total New Private Sector Mandates: 0

Year to Date Prior to Today's Bills: 5

*Not including the costs contained in H.R. 3783, the Surface Transportation Extension Act, which passed the House on 2/11/04. A cost estimate remains unavailable.

H.R. 2751—GAO Human Capital Reform Act of 2003 (JoAnn Davis)

Order of Business: The bill is scheduled for consideration on Wednesday, February 25th, under unanimous consent. The unanimous consent agreement provides for one hour of general debate and one motion to recommit, with or without instructions.

Summary: H.R. 2751 makes several modifications to the personnel policies at the General Accounting Office (GAO). Specifically the bill:

- Makes permanent GAO's three-year authority to offer voluntary early retirement and voluntary separation incentive payments to employees. This section of the bill also includes a sense of the Congress that this provision is intended to reshape, not downsize, the GAO workforce;
- Allows GAO to adjust pay annually on a level different from the cost-of-living adjustment provided to other federal employees (effective 10/1/05);
- Eliminates the requirement that GAO provide grade and pay retention to demoted employees (effective 10/1/05);
- Allows GAO to provide relocation payments to employees whose relocation is valuable to GAO, but does not meet the statutory requirements for reimbursement;
- Allows GAO to provide 160 hours of annual leave to "key officers and employees" (as defined in regulations) who have less than three years of service. Currently such employees receive 104 hours of annual leave;
- Establishes a five-year executive exchange program between GAO and the private sector, provided that the assignment of a GAO employee is an effective use of funds and that the number of employees participating does not exceed 15;
- Changes the name of the General Accounting Office to the Government Accountability Office;
- Requires GAO to consult with "any interested groups or associations" representing GAO employees before implementing any of the changes in the legislation; and
- Requires GAO to include in its annual report a summary of actions taken in regard to the new authorities provided in H.R. 2751.

Additional Background: Legislation similar to H.R. 2751, S. 1522, passed the Senate by unanimous consent on November 24, 2003.

Committee Action: H.R. 2751 was referred to the Committee on Government Reform on July 16, 2003. The Subcommittee on Civil Service and Agency Organization marked up the bill on July 23 and reported it to the full Committee by voice vote. The full Committee reported the bill to the House by voice vote on November 6, 2003.

Cost to Taxpayers: According to the Congressional Budget Office, H.R. 2751 would increase mandatory spending by \$19 million over the 2004-2008 period and \$40 million over the 2004-2013 period (due to increased spending on retirement annuities and related health benefits). The bill could affect GAO's total employee compensation costs, but CBO was unable to provide an estimate of any cost or savings.

Does the Bill Create New Federal Programs or Rules?: No, the bill makes a variety of changes to personnel policies at the General Accounting Office.

Does the Bill Contain Any New State-Government, Local-Government, or Private-Sector Mandates?: No.

Constitutional Authority: The Committee on Government Reform, in House Report 108-380, cites the general legislative authority in Article I.

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H.Con.Res. 287—Honoring the life of the late Raul Julia, his dedication to ending world hunger, and his great contributions to the Latino community and the performing arts (*Gutierrez*)

Order of Business: The resolution is scheduled for consideration on Wednesday, February 25th, under a motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill.

Summary: H.Con.Res. 287 resolves that the Congress “recognizes and honors the life of the late Raul Julia, his dedication to ending world hunger, and his great contributions to the Latino community and the performing arts.”

Additional Background: Born Raul Rafael Julia y Arcelay in San Juan, Puerto Rico, Raul Julia immigrated to New York in 1964. He is best known for his work on Broadway, including Tony-award nominated roles in “Two Gentlemen of Verona,” “Threepenny Opera,” and “Nine,” and for movie roles in “Kiss of the Spiderwoman” and two Addams family films. Julia died of complications from a stroke on October 24, 1994.

According to the resolution, Raul Julia was “an extremely successful stage, film and television actor who never abandoned his Puerto Rican heritage, never changed his name and never gave up his accent, thereby becoming an enduring role model for hundreds of Latino actors” and “a dedicated activist and humanitarian who in his lifetime became a major supporter and spokesperson for the Hunger Project, a nonprofit organization committed to the eradication of world hunger.”

Committee Action: H.Con.Res. 287 was introduced on September 23, 2003, and referred to the Committee on Government Reform. The committee favorably reported the resolution by unanimous consent on February 12, 2004.

Cost to Taxpayers: The resolution authorizes no expenditure.

Does the Bill Create New Federal Programs or Rules?: No.

Does the Bill Contain Any New State-Government, Local-Government, or Private-Sector Mandates?: No.

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H.R. 3690—Barber Conable Post Office Building Designation Act (Reynolds)

Order of Business: The bill is scheduled to be considered on Wednesday, February 25th, under a motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill.

Summary: H.R. 3690 would designate the United States Postal Service facility located at 2 West Main Street in Batavia, New York, as the “Barber Conable Post Office Building.”

Additional Background: Barber Conable was a Republican congressman from 1965-1985 and was the President of the World Bank for five years after leaving the U.S. House. He died on December 2, 2003. For more background, visit this webpage:

http://www.napanews.com/templates/index.cfm?template=story_full&id=9829E23E-7012-41F2-9856-47C0498E2125

Committee Action: On February 12, 2004, the Government Reform Committee reported the bill to the full House by unanimous consent.

Possible Conservative Concerns: None.

Cost to Taxpayers: The only costs associated with a post office renaming are those for sign and map changes, none of which significantly affect the federal budget.

Does the Bill Create New Federal Programs or Rules?: No.

Does the Bill Contain Any New State-Government, Local-Government, or Private-Sector Mandates?: No.

Constitutional Authority: Though no committee report citing constitutional authority is available, Article I, Section 8, Clause 7 of the Constitution grants Congress the authority to “establish Post Offices and post Roads.”

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