

July 11, 2000

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The following measures may be voted on by the House on Tuesday, July 11:

S. 1892 — ACQUISITION OF THE VALLES CALDERA IN NEW MEXICO

Cost to the Taxpayer: CBO estimates that it would cost between \$6 and \$10 million over the next five years to build a visitors center and provide operating expenses for the new federal ranch. In addition, CBO estimates that provisions in the bill allowing for the purchase of certain non-federal lands would increase direct spending by \$15 million over the next ten years.

Does the Bill Create New Government Programs or Regulations: YES. The bill does the following:

- C Authorizes the purchase of 94,761 acres of privately owned land known as the Baca Ranch in New Mexico. The purchase would be funded through donations, exchanges, or from the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Once acquired, the Ranch would become part of a newly established Valles Caldera National Preserve.
- C Establishes a NEW government corporation to manage and operate the Preserve. While the Corporation is supposed to become financially self-sustaining within 15 years, it is authorized to receive appropriations. The Corporation may also set fees for the use of the ranch. Employees of the Corporation will be federal employees.
- C The bill creates a new “Federal Land Disposal Account” into which the Department of Interior and Agriculture will deposit proceeds from the sale of surplus lands. The Departments of Interior and Agriculture will then be permitted to use the proceeds, without further action by Congress, to purchase inholdings from “willing sellers” that are already authorized for purchase. 80% of the funds generated from the sale of lands must be used to acquire land within the same State. The agency may retain 20% of the proceeds for administrative costs. Under current law, Congress must first appropriate the proceeds generated from the sale of lands before they can be used to acquire new land.

Constitutional Authority: None cited.

Other Information: Concern has been raised about the price being paid by the government for the privately owned ranch. Current estimates indicate that it could cost as much as \$101 million to purchase the ranch. The GAO has indicated that at this level, the government may be overpaying by as much as \$37 million. While generally supportive of the idea of funding the purchase of new land through the sale of existing land, some Members are concerned about the adequacy of the “willing seller” protections.

H.R. 4579 — UTAH WEST LAND EXCHANGE ACT

Cost to the Taxpayer: A cost estimate is not available, however, the bill specifies that the federal government and the State of Utah will each bear their own respective costs incurred as a result of implementing the land transfer.

Does the Bill Create New Government Programs or Regulations: NO. The bill authorizes a land transfer agreement between the State of Utah and the federal government under which the State of Utah will transfer land within federally proposed wilderness study areas, but which belongs to the State School Trust Fund to the federal government in exchange for other federal land of approximately equal value.

Constitutional Authority: None cited.

H.R. 4063 — ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ROSIE THE RIVETER NATIONAL HISTORIC PARK

Cost to the Taxpayer: The bill authorizes such sums as may be necessary. While a cost estimate is not available the cost to acquire a leasehold interest in the Ford Assembly Building in Richmond, California and to operate the National Park could be significant.

Does the Bill Create New Government Programs or Regulations: YES. The bill creates a NEW National Park in Richmond, California, authorizes the establishment of a WW II Home Front Education Center and authorizes the Park Service to assist in the “interpretation of 13 separate memorials, parks, trails or sites.

Constitutional Authority: None cited.

H.R. 4528-- INTERNATIONAL ACADEMIC OPPORTUNITY ACT

Cost to the Taxpayer: There bill authorizes \$1.5 million for each fiscal year to carry out this Act. The CBO has not produced a cost estimate of this bill.

Does the Bill Create New Government Programs or Regulations: YES. The bill creates an undergraduate grant program through the Department of State for students of "limited financial means from the United States to enable such students to study at institutions of higher education in foreign countries." Grants of up to \$5,000 would be awarded by the Secretary of State to individuals who meet eligibility requirements for undergraduate study abroad.

Constitutional Authority: None cited.

Other Information: Grants are available for one year for students who meet the following eligibility requirements: (1) is a student in good standing at an institution of higher education in the United States (as defined in section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965); (2) has been accepted for an academic year of study at an institution of higher education outside the United States (as defined by section 102(b) of the Higher Education Act of 1965); (3) is receiving any need-based student assistance under title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965; and (4) is a citizen or national of the United States. Priority is given to students receiving Federal Pell Grants under title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965. Application and selection is to be carried out through accredited institutions of higher education under a process determined by the Secretary of State.

H.CON.RES. 348-- CHILD SOLDIERS

Cost to the Taxpayer: None, Sense of House Resolution

Does the Bill Create New Government Programs or Regulations: No.

Constitutional Authority: No Committee report was filed, and no authority is cited in the resolution.

Summary: The resolution expresses the sense of the House that Congress joins the international community in condemning the use of children as soldiers, "welcoming" the United Nations optional protocol on the use of child soldiers, and "applauding" the decision by the U.S. Government to support the United Nations optional protocol.

Areas of Possible Concern: The resolution further states that President Clinton should sign the optional protocol and that the Senate should ratify the protocol, that Congress should enact a law to establish a new fund for the rehabilitation and reintegration into society of child soldiers; and that the State and Defense Departments should "undertake all possible efforts" to persuade and encourage other governments to ratify and endorse the UN protocol. Some Members may have concerns that these resolutions encourage new federal programs, and U.S. involvement to promote United Nations documents.

H.R. 894-- AIMEE'S LAW

Cost to the Taxpayer: No CBO estimate is available. The bill revokes a portion of federal law enforcement funds from a state that lets a criminal out and redistributes it for prosecution, incarceration, and victim assistance costs to the state where the criminal commits another crime of the same nature. The original bill capped the dollar amount to be transferred, but that portion has been struck from the current bill language.

Does the Bill Create New Government Programs or Regulations: Yes, the bill changes the funding formulas for federal law enforcement grants and also requires the U.S. Attorney General to collect recidivism data and report such data to Congress on the number of convictions for murder, rape, and sex offenses and repeat convictions.

Constitutional Authority: No Committee report was filed, and no authority is cited in the resolution.

Summary. Aimee's law was voted on as an amendment to the Juvenile Justice bill on June 16, 1999 and passed 412-15 (Roll Call #212). The bill will change the federal law enforcement assistance funds' distribution formulas to revoke a portion of federal funds from a state which releases a criminal convicted of murder, rape, or a dangerous sexual offense, if that criminal commits a similar crime in another state. Half of the revoked funds shall be paid to the second State's crime victim assistance program and half shall go into the State's law enforcement funds. Added to the original bill language is a safe harbor for the first convicting state if recidivist criminals served 85% of their sentence, if the first state of incarceration was a truth-in-sentencing state and has a higher than average typical incarceration time for the crime.

H.CON.RES. 253-- OBJECTING TO EFFORT TO EXPEL HOLY SEE FROM UNITED NATIONS

Cost to the Taxpayer: None, Sense of House Resolution

Does the Bill Create New Government Programs or Regulations: No.

Constitutional Authority: No Committee report was filed, and no authority is cited in the resolution.

Summary: The resolution (1) commends the Holy See for its strong commitment to fundamental human rights, including the protection of innocent human life both before and after birth; (2) objects to any effort to expel the Holy See from the UN by removing its status as a nonmember state Permanent Observer; (3) says that any degradation in the Vatican's UN status "would seriously damage the credibility of the United Nations by demonstrating that its rules of participation are manipulable for ideological reasons rather than being rooted in neutral principles and objective facts of sovereignty"; and (4) expresses concern that such degradation "would seriously damage relations between the United Nations and member states that find in the Holy See a moral and ethical presence with which they can work effectively in pursuing humanitarian approaches to international problems."

The resolution is precipitated by some efforts over the past year to pressure the UN to remove the Vatican's Permanent Observer status. Many of these organizations behind the efforts oppose the views of the Holy See regarding the sanctity of human life and the value of the family as the basic unit of society.

The so-called "See Change" coalition (hosted and founded by the pro-abortion "Catholics for a Free Choice") denies that their campaign is motivated by the Catholic Church's opposition to abortion, yet the list of some of See Change's endorsers comprise a veritable Who's Who of the abortion industry:

Abortion Law Reform Association - UK

Association for the Legal Right to Abortion (WA) Inc. (ALRA) - Australia

Canadian Abortion Rights Action League - Canada

Center for Reproductive Law and Policy - USA
International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) - UK
International Society of Abortion Doctors - The
Marie Stopes International - UK
Medical Students for Choice - USA
National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League (NARAL) - USA
National Abortion Campaign - UK
National Abortion Federation - USA
National Network of Abortion Funds - USA
National Organization for Women (NOW) - USA
Physicians for Reproductive Health and Choice - USA
Planned Parenthood Association of South Africa (PPASA) - South Africa
Planned Parenthood Federation of America - USA
Pro Choice League - USA
Pro-Choice Alliance - Namibia
Voters For Choice - USA

The views expressed in this Legislative Bulletin do not necessarily reflect the views of all Members of the Conservative Action Team.

The Conservative Action Team is a Congressional Member Organization of over 50 Republican House Members and is chaired by Representative John Shadegg (R-AZ).