



Legislative Bulletin.....April 14, 2008

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Summary of the Bills Under Consideration Today:

Total Number of New Government Programs: 0

Total Cost of Discretionary Authorizations: \$7 million in FY 2009 and \$24 million over the FY 2009 through FY 2013 period.

Effect on Revenue: \$0

Total Change in Mandatory Spending: \$0

Total New State & Local Government Mandates: \$0

Total New Private Sector Mandates: 0

Number of Bills Without Committee Reports: 0

Number of Reported Bills that Don’t Cite Specific Clauses of Constitutional Authority: 0

H.Res. 866—Expressing sympathy to the victims and families of the tragic acts of violence in Colorado Springs, Colorado and Arvada, Colorado (Lamborn, R-CO)

Order of Business: H.Res. 866 is scheduled to be considered on Monday, April 14, 2008, under a motion to suspend the rules and pass the resolution.

Summary: H.Res. 866 would express the sense that the House:

- “Offers its heartfelt condolences to the victims and families of the tragic acts of violence in Colorado Springs, Colorado and Arvada, Colorado;
- “Conveys its gratitude to Jeanne Assam, city and county officials, as well as the police, fire, sheriff, Federal authorities, and emergency medical teams whose quick response saved lives; and
- “Reaffirms that New Life Church, Youth With A Mission, and all other communities and organizations of faith in our country should be places of refuge from violence and hatred, and deserve protection from the same.”

The resolution lists a number of findings, including:

- “On Sunday December 9, 2007, a man entered the New Life Church property with the intent to cause harm to members and guests of the church
- “The attacker shot 5 bystanders at the New Life Church, killing 2 of them and injuring 3 others;
- “The shooting resulted in the tragic loss of Stephanie Works, 18, and Rachel Works, 16, who lost their lives from wounds sustained from shots fired by the attacker;
- “Jeanne Assam, a volunteer private security guard, heroically rushed into harm’s way and used her own gun to stop the shooter, thereby saving the lives of several other bystanders;
- “The shooting at Youth With A Mission resulted in the death of Tiffany Johnson, 26, and Philip Crouse, 24;
- “The attacker seriously wounded Dan Griebenow and Charlie Blanch; and
- “Local first responders in the City of Arvada and Jefferson County Colorado responded quickly and professionally, thereby saving wounded individuals.”

Committee Action: H.Res. 866 was introduced on December 18, 2007, and referred to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. On March 13, 2008, a committee mark-up was held and the resolution was reported by voice vote.

Cost to Taxpayers: The resolution does not authorize expenditures.

Does the Bill Expand the Size and Scope of the Federal Government? No.

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

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H.Res. 994—Expressing support for designation of a National Glanzmann’s Thrombasthenia Awareness Day (Broun, R-GA)

Order of Business: H.Res. 994 is scheduled to be considered on Monday, April 14, 2008, under a motion to suspend the rules and pass the resolution.

Summary: H.Res. 994 would express the sense that the House “supports the designation of a National Glanzmann’s Thrombasthenia Awareness Day.” The resolution would also request that the Clerk of the House transmit the resolution to a number of national leaders in the fight against Glanzmann’s Thrombasthenia.

The resolution lists a number of findings, including:

- “Glanzmann’s Thrombasthenia affects men, women, and children of all ages;
- “This disorder is very distressing to those who have it, causing great discomfort and severe emotional stress;
- “Children with Glanzmann’s Thrombasthenia are unable to participate in many normal childhood activities including most sports and are often subject to social discomfort because of their disorder;
- “Glanzmann’s Thrombasthenia includes a wide range of symptoms including life-threatening, uncontrollable bleeding and severe bruising;
- “Glanzmann’s Thrombasthenia is frequently misdiagnosed or undiagnosed by medical professionals;
- “Currently there is no cure for Glanzmann’s Thrombasthenia;
- ‘It is essential to educate the public on the symptoms, treatments, and constant efforts to cure Glanzmann’s Thrombasthenia to insure early diagnosis and treatment of the condition;
- “Helen P. Smith established the Glanzmann’s Thrombasthenia Research Foundation in Augusta, Georgia, in 2001;
- “Helen P. Smith and the Glanzmann’s Thrombasthenia Research Foundation have worked tirelessly to promote awareness of Glanzmann’s Thrombasthenia and help fund research on the disorder; and
- “March 1 would be an appropriate day to establish a National Glanzmann’s Thrombasthenia Awareness Day.”

Committee Action: H.Res. 994 was introduced on February 25, 2008, and referred to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. On March 13, 2008, a committee mark-up was held and the resolution was reported, as amended, by voice vote.

Cost to Taxpayers: The resolution does not authorize expenditures.

Does the Bill Expand the Size and Scope of the Federal Government? No.

Does the Bill Contain Any New State-Government, Local-Government, or Private-Sector

Mandates? No.

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H.R. 5517—To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 7231 FM 1960 in Humble, Texas, as the “Texas Military Veterans Post Office” (Poe, R-TX)

Order of Business: H.R. 5517 is scheduled for consideration on Monday, April 14, 2008, under a motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill.

Summary: H.R. 5517 would designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 7231 FM 1960 in Humble, Texas, as the “Texas Military Veterans Post Office.”

Additional Background: The Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) was established by the Texas Legislature in 1927 to ensure that every veteran from Texas had the ability to access the benefits afforded to them under the law. According to the TVC’s Website, as of September 30, 2007, there were more than 1.7 million veterans living throughout Texas.

Committee Action: H.R. 5517 was introduced on February 28, 2008, and referred to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, which held a mark-up and reported the bill by voice vote on March 13, 2008.

Cost to Taxpayers: A CBO score for H.R. 5517 is unavailable, but the only costs associated with a U.S. post office renaming are those for sign and map changes, none of which significantly affect the federal budget.

Does the Bill Expand the Size and Scope of the Federal Government? No.

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

Does the Bill Comply with House Rules Regarding Earmarks/Limited Tax Benefits/Limited Tariff Benefits? A Committee Report citing compliance with rules regarding earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits was not available. Such a report is not required because the bill is being considered under a suspension of the rules.

Constitutional Authority: Although 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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H.R. 4881—Contracting and Tax Accountability Act of 2007 *(Ellsworth, D-IN)*

Order of Business: The bill is scheduled to be considered on Monday, April 14, 2008, under a motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill.

Summary: H.R. 4881 would prohibit contractors who owe delinquent federal tax debt from obtaining a contract awarded by the government. The bill would only apply to contracts that exceed the simplified acquisition threshold, which is \$100,000 for domestic contracts or \$200,000 for overseas humanitarian contracts. The bill would also give the head of a federal agency the authority to unilaterally waive the prohibition if they see fit.

H.R. 4881 would require any contractor that submits a bid proposal to include a form to certify that they do not have a “seriously delinquent” tax debt. In addition, contractors submitting bids to the government must grant the Secretary of Treasury the authority to disclose tax information to the head of the relevant agency. A contractor would not be considered to be “seriously delinquent” if a debt is being paid in a timely manner in accordance with an agreement with the IRS or if the debt in question is subject to a pending hearing or hearing request.

Additional Background: According to [House Report 110-578](#), the Government Accountability Office (GAO) found that government-hired contractors owed an estimated \$5 billion in unpaid federal taxes in 2004 and 2005. These taxes usually represent money that was withheld from employees and never paid to the federal government. The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform asserts that some contractors with delinquent tax debt have won contracts over contractors that had fully paid their taxes. H.R. 4881 would attempt to force compliance with tax laws by prohibiting contractors with outstanding debt from receiving government contracts. The bill would also force contractors to certify that they owed no delinquent taxes when they submitted a bid proposal to an agency for a federal contract.

In additional views included in [House Report 110-578](#), Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Ranking Member Tom Davis (R-VA) points out that the administration is already working on similar changes to current regulations. According to Rep. Davis, the administration is in the process of instituting regulations that would require any contractors making bids on federal contracts to certify that they do not owe outstanding tax debt. Rep. Davis concludes that, “since the issue addressed in H.R. 4881 is already being addressed through the regulatory process it is not totally clear to me what we are accomplishing with this legislation. Nevertheless I have no real objection and therefore supported the legislation in Committee.”

Committee Action: H.R. 4881 was introduced on December 19, 2007, and referred to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform’s Subcommittee on Government Management, Organization, and Procurement. On March 11, 2008, a subcommittee mark-up was held and the bill was reported, as amended, by voice vote. The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform held a mark-up and reported the amended bill by voice vote on March 13, 2008.

Cost to Taxpayers: According to CBO, H.R. 4881 would cost \$5 million in FY 2009 and \$14 million over the FY 2009 through FY 2013 period for the Secretary of Treasury to work with other agencies to carry out the requirements of the bill. According to the Joint Committee on Taxation, H.R. 4881 would have a “negligible effect of revenues.”

Does the Bill Expand the Size and Scope of the Federal Government? No.

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

Does the Bill Comply with House Rules Regarding Earmarks/Limited Tax Benefits/Limited Tariff Benefits? [House Report 110-578](#) states that, “H.R. 4881 does not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9(d), 9(e), or 9(f) of Rule XXI.”

Constitutional Authority: Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, in [House Report 110-578](#), cites constitutional authority in Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 (the “necessary and proper” clause).

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H.R. 3548—Plain Language in Government Communications Act of 2007 (Braley, D-IA)

Order of Business: The bill is scheduled to be considered on Monday, April 14, 2008, under a motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill.

Summary: H.R. 3548 would require that, within one year, each federal agency use “plain language” in any document that explains how a federal benefit or service is obtained. The term “plain language” would be defined as “language that the intended audience can readily understand and use because it is clear, concise, well-organized, and follows other best practices of plain language writing.” Agency documents required to be written in plain language under the bill would include letters, publications, forms, notices, or instructions issued by an agency, but would not include regulations.

Within six months of the enactment of the bill, each agency head would be required to submit a report describing how the agency intends to:

- Communicate the requirements of this Act to agency employees;
- Train agency employees to write in plain language;
- Meet the deadline set forth in the bill (one year);
- Ensure ongoing compliance; and
- Designate a senior official to be responsible for implementing these requirements.

Finally, H.R. 3548 would require each agency head to make an annual progress report each of the first two years following enactment of the bill and once every three years thereafter.

Additional Background: According to www.plainlanguage.gov (the federal government's Website devoted to commonly understood government documents), efforts to encourage plain language have been undertaken since the end of WW II. In the 1970s, President Nixon proclaimed that the Federal Register be written in "layman's terms." President Carter continued the tradition by issuing orders that required government documents to be "cost-effective and easy-to-understand by those who were required to comply with them." In 1998 President Clinton created a new plain language requirement for certain federal agencies. Currently, some (but not all) agencies have codified standards for plain language use. H.R. 3548 would create a general plain language standard for federal documents that explain how a federal benefit or service is obtained, but not for regulations.

Committee Action: H.R. 3548 was introduced on September 17, 2007, and referred to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform's Subcommittee on Information Policy, Census, and National Archives. On January 29, 2008, a subcommittee mark-up was held and the bill was reported, as amended, by voice vote. The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform held a mark-up and reported the amended bill by voice vote on March 13, 2008.

Cost to Taxpayers: According to CBO, H.R. 3548 would cost \$2 million annually for agencies to comply with the requirements under the bill. In addition, CBO estimates that the bill would also affect direct spending for certain agencies that are not subject to the appropriations process (such as the Tennessee Valley Authority). CBO estimates that any increase in direct spending would not be significant.

Does the Bill Expand the Size and Scope of the Federal Government? No.

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

Does the Bill Comply with House Rules Regarding Earmarks/Limited Tax Benefits/Limited Tariff Benefits? [House Report 110-580](#) states that, "H.R. 3548 does not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9(d), 9(e), or 9(f) of Rule XXI."

Constitutional Authority: Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, in [House Report 110-580](#), cites constitutional authority in Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 (the "necessary and proper" clause).

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H.Res. 259—Honoring and recognizing the work of the Meals On Wheels Association of America, its member senior nutrition programs throughout the country, and their annual March For Meals campaigns (*LoBiondo, D-NJ*)

Order of Business: H.Res. 259 is scheduled to be considered on Monday, April 14, 2008, under a motion to suspend the rules and pass the resolution.

Summary: H.Res. 259 would express the sense that the House:

- “Recognizes the important work the Meals On Wheels Association of America and its member senior nutrition programs throughout the country do in preventing senior hunger and improving the quality of life for hundreds of thousands of our nation’s seniors each year,
- “Recognizes the important role the Meals On Wheels Association of America and its member programs throughout the country's March For Meals campaigns play in increasing awareness of the need for senior nutrition programs and in raising non-Federal funds and soliciting volunteers to support and assist these programs in accomplishing their important mission,
- “Honors the Meals On Wheels Association of America and its member programs for their continuing hard work and dedication on behalf of our nation’s seniors, and
- “Encourages Members of Congress to support their local senior nutrition programs by participating in their annual March For Meals events and delivering meals to homebound seniors in a community within their district or State.’

The resolution lists a number of findings, including:

- “Meals On Wheels Association of America is the oldest and largest organization in the United States representing those who provide meal services to people in need;
- “The Meals On Wheels member local senior nutrition programs help those men and women in cities, suburban areas, and rural communities across America who are elderly, homebound, disabled, frail, or at risk;
- “The Meals On Wheels member programs provide nutritious meals to individuals who suffer from long-term chronic conditions as well as those who may just need short-term assistance;
- “Good nutrition is essential to good health and the meals provided by senior nutrition programs contribute to the overall well-being of America’s seniors;
- “In the words of the Meals On Wheels Association of America, these programs are needed ‘so no senior goes hungry’; and
- “Each March, chosen because it was during this month that the law was enacted that included senior meal programs in the Older Americans Act of 1965, Meals On Wheels member programs across the country conduct local, community-based “March For Meals” fundraising and awareness campaigns.”

Committee Action: H.Res. 259 was introduced on March 31, 2007, and referred to the Committee on Education and Labor, which took no official action.

Cost to Taxpayers: The resolution does not authorize expenditures.

Does the Bill Expand the Size and Scope of the Federal Government? No.

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

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H.Res. 1097—Expressing support for the designation of the month of April 2008, as National Child Abuse Prevention Month to provide attention to the tragic circumstances that face some of our Nation’s children on a daily basis and to underscore our commitment to preventing child abuse and neglect so that all children can live in safety and security (*Courtney, D-CT*)

Order of Business: H.Res. 1097 is scheduled to be considered on Monday, April 14, 2008, under a motion to suspend the rules and pass the resolution.

Summary: H.Res. 1097 would express the sense that the House:

- “Expresses support for the designation of National Child Abuse Prevention Month;
- “Should increase public awareness of child abuse and neglect prevention and should continue to work with the States to reduce the incidence of child abuse and neglect; and
- “Should recognize that child abuse and neglect prevention programs reduce child maltreatment, strengthen families, reduce mental illness, deter criminal behavior, and contribute to children’s positive emotional, academic, social, and cognitive development.”

The resolution lists a number of findings, including:

- “In 2006, an estimated 905,000 children were determined to be victims of abuse or neglect out of an estimated 6,600,000 children referred for investigations and assessments;
- “The number of children who received an investigation or assessment by Child Protective Services increased by 333,000 from 2002 to 2006;
- “In 2006, an estimated 1,530 children died tragically as a result of abuse or neglect;
- “25 percent of the children abused and neglected are likely to be maltreated again;
- “Child abuse and neglect can have long-term economic and societal costs;
- “Community-based services to overburdened families are far less costly than the emotional and physical damage inflicted on children or the costs of child protective services, law enforcement, courts, foster care, health care, and the treatment of adults recovering from child abuse;
- “The annual estimated cost to the United States for not preventing child abuse and neglect is approximately \$104,000,000,000, according to a 2008 report by Prevent Child Abuse America;
- “Child protection agencies are unable to provide important follow-up services such as counseling or case management to 40 percent of the abused and neglected children on their caseloads; and

- “It is appropriate to designate the month of April 2008, as National Child Abuse Prevention Month.

Committee Action: H.Res. 1097 was introduced on March 31, 2007, and referred to the Committee on Education and Labor, which took no official action.

Cost to Taxpayers: The resolution does not authorize expenditures.

Does the Bill Expand the Size and Scope of the Federal Government? No.

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

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