House
REPUBLICAN
Conference

FloorPrep

Legislative Digest **Tuesday, April 15, 1997**

John Boehner
Chairman
8th District, Ohio

House Meets at 10:30 a.m. for Morning Hour and
12:00 Noon for Legislative Business
(No Votes Before 4:00 p.m.)

Anticipated Floor Action:
H.R. 1226—Taxpayer Browsing Protection Act
H.Res. 109—Expressing the Sense of Congress That American Families Deserve Tax Relief
H.R. 1001—Extending the Term of Appointments for Two Health Care Commissions
H.R. 1225—Technical Correction Relating to Jurisdiction for Lawsuits Against Terrorist States
H.J Res. 62—Tax Limitation Amendment

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Bills Considered Under Suspension of the Rules

Floor Situation: The House will consider the following four bills under suspension of the rules as its first order of business today. Each is debatable for 40 minutes, may not be amended, and requires a two-thirds majority vote for passage.

H.R. 1226—Tax Payer Browsing Protection Act makes it a crime under the Internal Revenue Code for an Internal Revenue Service employee to inspect tax returns or tax return information without authorization. Violation of this provision is punishable by a fine of up to $1,000 and/or one year imprisonment. In addition, the bill mandates that persons convicted under this provision be dismissed from office or discharged from employment. CBO estimates that enactment will have no significant impact on the federal budget. H.R. 1226 was introduced by Mr. Archer and Mrs. Johnson and was ordered reported by Judiciary Committee by voice vote.

H.Res. 109—Expressing the Sense of Congress That American Families Deserve Tax Relief expresses the sense of Congress that the president and Congress should work together to enact permanent tax relief for American families. The resolution is based on the belief that working families must commit an excess of their resources to fulfill their federal tax obligations; specifically, recent studies indicate that wages earned by American workers during the first four months, or roughly 120 days, of the calendar year go toward paying taxes. H.Res. 109 was introduced by Mr. Pitts and was not considered by any committee.

H.R. 1001—Extending the Terms of Two Health Care Commissions extends the appointed terms of both the Prospective Payment Assessment Commission (ProPAC) and the Physician Payment Review Commission (PPRC) until May 1, 1998. CBO estimates that enactment will result in no significant cost to the federal government. The bill was introduced by Mr. Thomas and Mr. Bilirakis, ordered reported by the Commerce Committee by voice vote, and discharged out of the Ways & Means Committee.

H.R. 1225—Technical Correction Relating to Jurisdiction for Lawsuits Against Terrorist States corrects a single drafting error in the 1996 Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act (*P.L. 104-132*). Specifically, the measure included a provision allowing U.S. citizens to sue foreign governments that commit or sponsor acts of terrorism against a U.S. citizen. As enacted, both the victim and the survivors seeking legal action must be U.S. citizens in order to file a lawsuit. However, the intent of the provision was to allow families the benefit of legal recourse if *either* the victim or the survivor was an American citizen. The bill arises from complications encountered by families of passengers of Pan Am Flight 109, which in 1989 exploded over Lockerbie, Scotland, because of a terrorist bomb smuggled aboard the plane. CBO estimates that enactment will have no significant effect on the federal budget. The bill was introduced by Mr. Hyde and was ordered reported by the Judiciary Committee by voice vote.

Additional Information: See *Legislative Digest*, Vol. XXVI, #9, April 11, 1997.

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H.J. Res. 62—Tax Limitation Amendment

Floor Situation: The House will consider H.J. Res. 62 today after it completes consideration of the scheduled suspensions. Yesterday, the Rules Committee granted a modified closed rule providing for three hours of general debate, equally divided between the chairman and ranking minority member of the Judiciary Committee. The committee also adopted an amendment to the base text offered during markup by Mr. McCollum. The amendment makes explicit that the resolution is not intended to affect legislation calling for tax cuts which spur economic growth, and thereby generate increased federal revenues. The rule further provides for one hour of debate on an amendment, if offered, by Mr. Gephardt or his designee. Finally, the rule provides one motion to recommit, with or without instructions.

Summary: H.J. Res. 62 proposes an amendment to the Constitution to require a two-thirds majority vote for passage of any legislation which would result in a tax increase (not including tariffs, user fees, or voluntary payments) when considered by the House and Senate. The bill allows Congress to

waive the supermajority requirement to pass a tax increase (1) during a period of declared war between the U.S. and another country or (2) when Congress and the president enact a resolution stating that the U.S. is engaged in a military conflict which threatens national security. Tax legislation enacted under this waiver can be in force for no longer than two years after its enactment. CBO estimates that enactment of H.J. Res. 62 will have no effect on the federal budget. H.J.Res. 62 was introduced by Mr. Barton et al. and was ordered reported by the Judiciary Committee by a vote of 18-10.

Views:

Republican Leadership: Supports
Chairman Hyde: Supports
Clinton Administration: No Position Available

Amendments: Although the rule makes in order a possible amendment by Mr. Gephardt or his designee, the *Legislative Digest* was unaware at press time of any such amendment or whether the minority leader intends to offer one.

Additional Information: See Legislative Digest, Vol. XXVI, #9, April 11, 1997.

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Brian Fortune: *Editor*

S. Kevin Washington:
Senior Legislative Analyst

Becci Clark, Melissa Decker,
Jimmy Papadimitriu, Kevin Smith:
Legislative Analysts

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