

The Ehlers e-Newsletter

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Monday, January 26, 2004

News from Congressman Ehlers ...

EHLERS: BUSH'S SOTU 'A VERY GOOD, SOLID SPEECH' – In response to President George W. Bush's 2004 State of the Union address to a joint session of Congress Tuesday evening, Congressman Vernon J. Ehlers, R-Grand Rapids, made the following comments: "President Bush gave a very good, solid speech tonight. This was not the type of speech that we've heard many times from other presidents and candidates, where they say only things everyone wants to hear, promise everything to everyone and ultimately can't deliver on those promises."

For Congressman Ehlers' complete statement, please visit our website:

http://www.house.gov/apps/list/press/mi03_ehlers/012004SOTUReax.html

THIS WEEK IN THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MONDAY, JANUARY 26, 2004

On Monday, the House will not be in session.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 27, 2004

On Tuesday, the House will meet at 12:30 p.m. for morning hour and 2 p.m. legislative business. Votes will be postponed until 6:30 p.m.

Suspensions (3 Bills):

(Bills on suspension are generally considered non-controversial and have reduced debate time, but require a two-thirds majority vote to be passed.)

- 1) **H.R. 2751 - GAO Human Capital Reform Act of 2003:** Expands the management flexibilities that the GAO already has. This legislation gives the Comptroller General more authority to reward employees for good work and establishes a meaningful pay-for-performance system. It also makes permanent the GAO's authority to offer early retirement and buyouts, expands its ability to reimburse employees for relocation expenses, permits the Comptroller General to increase the annual leave benefits for employees who join the GAO in mid-career, and establishes an exchange program with the private sector. It also changes the name of the organization from the "General Accounting Office" to the "Government Accountability Office," a more realistic title based on the agency's mission.
- 2) **H.R. 1385 - To extend the provision of title 39, United States Code, under which the United States Postal Service is authorized to issue a special postage stamp to benefit breast cancer research:** Extends the life of this semipostal stamp for breast cancer research. Semipostal stamps, sold at a premium to raise funds for a worthy cause, have been issued by postal authorities around the world for many decades, but they have only recently been authorized by Congress for use in the United States because they were opposed by the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) and stamp collectors. The Breast Cancer Research stamp was introduced in July 1998 and has raised \$35 million in 5 years, net of USPS costs, for Federal agencies to support research in treating breast cancer.

- 3) **H.R. 3493 - Medical Devices Technical Corrections Act of 2003:** Makes technical corrections and other amendments to the Medical Device User Fee Modernization Act of 2002.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 28, 2004

On Wednesday, the House will meet at 10 a.m. for legislative business.

S. 1920 - To extend for 6 months the period for which chapter 12 of title 11 of the United States Code is reenacted: Re-enacts and extends for six months Chapter 12 of the Bankruptcy Code, a specialized form of bankruptcy relief for family farmers. Chapter 12 was originally enacted in 1986 on a temporary basis in response to the farming crisis of the 1980's. Since its enactment, Chapter 12 has been extended ten times. The last extension expired as of December 31, 2003. Chapter 12 is used comparatively infrequently. Annual filings between 1999 to 2002 have ranged from a low of 383 in 2001 to 834 in 1999.

S. 610 - NASA Workforce Flexibility Act of 2003: Authorizes NASA greater flexibility to recruit, retain, and restructure its workforce to address the agency's critical needs. Prohibits politically appointed employees in NASA from benefiting from the authorities provided in the bill.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 29, 2004 AND THE BALANCE OF THE WEEK

On Thursday and Friday, no votes are expected in the House.

Historical Tidbits

On Jan. 26 ...

1784 - In a letter to his daughter, Benjamin Franklin expressed unhappiness over the eagle as the symbol of America. He wanted the symbol to be the turkey.

1802 - The U.S. Congress passed an act calling for a library to be established within the U.S. Capitol.

1837 - Michigan became the 26th member of the United States.

1962 - The U.S. launched *Ranger 3* to land scientific instruments on the moon. The probe missed its target by about 22,000 miles.

1992 - Russian president Boris Yeltsin announced that his country would stop targeting U.S. cities with nuclear weapons.

1999 - Saddam Hussein vowed revenge against the U.S. in response to air-strikes that reportedly killed civilians. The strikes were U.S. planes defending themselves against anti-aircraft fire.

On Jan. 27 ...

1967 - At Cape Kennedy, astronauts Virgil I. "Gus" Grissom, Edward H. White and Grand Rapids native Roger B. Chaffee died in a flash fire during a test aboard their *Apollo 1* spacecraft.

1981 - U.S. President Reagan greeted the 52 former American hostages released by Iran at the White House.

On Jan. 28 ...

1916 - Louis D. Brandeis was appointed by President Wilson to the U.S. Supreme Court, becoming its first Jewish member.

1986 - The U.S. space shuttle *Challenger* exploded just after takeoff. All seven of its crewmembers were killed.

On Jan. 29 ...

1790 - Rhode Island became the last of the original thirteen colonies to ratify the [U.S. Constitution](#).

1848 - Wisconsin became the 30th member of the United States.

1916 - The official flag of the president of the United States was adopted.

1916 - U.S. forces invaded Dominican Republic and remained until 1924.

1922 - The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that organized baseball was a sport, not subject to antitrust laws.

On Jan. 30 ...

1798 - The first brawl in the U.S. House of Representatives took place. Congressmen Matthew Lyon and Roger Griswold fought on the House floor.

1862 - The U.S. Navy's first ironclad warship, the "Monitor", was launched.

(Information from <http://www.on-this-day.com>)