

The Ehlers e-Newsletter

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For the Week of Monday, March 8, 2004

News from Congressman Ehlers ...

MARS ROVER FINDS SIGNS OF ANCIENT WATER – NASA's robotic explorer Opportunity last week discovered signs that liquid water may have existed on the surface of Mars, leading scientists to speculate that the planet might have once been capable of supporting life, NASA officials reported.

For more information about the Mars exploration program, visit NASA's website at: <http://marsrovers.jpl.nasa.gov/home/index.html>

U.S. SENDS PEACEKEEPERS TO HAITI AS NATION'S LEADER STEPS DOWN – More than 1,000 Marines were deployed to Haiti last week as part of a multinational force expected to reach 5,000 to help quell unrest in the wake of Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide's decision to flee to exile. Aristide claims he was forced out of office by the U.S., a charge the White House denies.

For more information on this developing situation, check your locals and national media outlets.

THIS WEEK IN THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES MONDAY, MARCH 8, 2004

On Monday, the House will meet at 12 noon in a pro forma session.

TUESDAY, MARCH 9, 2004

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

Suspensions (8 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.Res. 519 - Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives with respect to the earthquake that occurred in San Luis Obispo County, Calif., on Dec. 22, 2003:** Resolves that the House of Representatives is saddened by the loss of life and property caused by the earthquake that occurred in San Luis Obispo County, California, on December 22, 2003, and sends its deepest condolences to the victims and their families and recognizes and honors those local officials, public safety and law enforcement personnel, and individuals, who in private or public capacity provided assistance to the victims of the earthquake and their families, and commends this dedicated service to the residents of San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara Counties and the State of California.
- 2) H.R. 3536 - Army Staff Sgt. Lincoln Hollinsaid Malden Post Office Designation Act (Malden, Illinois)**
- 3) H.R. 3537 - Army Pvt. Shawn Pahnke Manhattan Post Office Designation Act (Manhattan, Illinois)**
- 4) H.R. 3538 - Marine Capt. Ryan Beaupre Saint Anne Post Office Designation Act (Saint Anne, Illinois)**

- 5) **H.Res. 392 - Congratulating the Detroit Shock for winning the 2003 Women's National Basketball Association championship**
- 6) **H.Res. 475 - Congratulating the San Jose Earthquakes for winning the 2003 Major League Soccer**
- 7) **S. 1881 - Medical Devices Technical Corrections Act:** Modifies third party inspection requirements to ensure that companies can use third party inspectors for two consecutive 510 (h) inspections; places an 18-month moratorium on the implementation of the branding provisions under MDUFMA's section 301; and calls on the FDA to complete a report on the barriers to the availability of devices intended for pediatric patients.
- 8) **H.Con.Res. 334 - Expressing the sense of Congress that "Kids Love a Mystery Month" should be established:** Resolves that it is the sense of Congress that "Kids Love a Mystery Month" should be established, and the President should issue a proclamation encouraging the people of the United States and interested groups to observe such a month with appropriate programs and activities.

WEDNESDAY AND THURSDAY, MARCH 10 AND 11, 2004

On Wednesday and Thursday, the House will meet at 10 a.m.

Suspensions (4 bills):

- 1) **H.Con.Res. 15 - Commending India on its celebration of Republic Day:** Resolves that Congress commends India on its celebration of Republic Day (January 26) and reiterates its support for continued strong relations between the United States and India.
- 2) **H.Res. 540 - Expressing the condolences and deepest sympathies of the House of Representatives for the untimely death of Macedonian President Boris Trajkovski:** Resolves that the House of Representatives expresses its deepest sympathies to the people of The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the family of President Boris Trajkovski, and the families of the other crash victims; expresses its desire for a smooth and orderly transition of power and expresses the solidarity of the people of the United States with the people of Macedonia and the Macedonian government during this tragedy.
- 3) **H.R. 2714 - State Justice Institute Reauthorization Act:** Authorizes the operations of the State Justice Institute (SJI) for FYs 2005-08. SJI serves a Federal interest by helping to make state courts more efficient. With the Federal dockets clogged and the Presidential judicial nominations stalled, most litigation in our country takes place in the state courts. The SJI helps combat the old adage that "justice delayed is justice denied."
- 4) **H.R. 2391 - Cooperative Research and Technology Enhancement (CREATE) Act:** Responds to the 1997 *OddzON Products, Inc. v. Just Toys, Inc.* decision of the Federal Circuit Court of Appeals. The legislation is intended to ameliorate the effects of the decision by clarifying Congress' intent to permit the patenting of inventions that result from collaborative or "team research" in circumstances not permitted under current law. Enactment of the CREATE Act will provide collaborative researchers affiliated with multiple organizations a statutory "safe harbor" that is similar to that available under the patent law to researchers

employed by a single organization or who have established certain types of legal relationships. In so doing, the CREATE Act is expected to foster improved communication among researchers, provide additional certainty and structure for those who engage in collaborative research, reduce patent litigation incentives, and spur innovation and investment.

H.R. 339 - Personal Responsibility in Food Consumption Act: Generally prohibits obesity or weight gain-related claims against the food industry. It would, however, allow obesity-related claims to go forward in several circumstances, including cases in which a state or Federal law was broken and as a result a person gained weight. Under H.R. 339, cases could also go forward in which a company violates an express contract or warranty. Since H.R. 339 only applies to claims based on “weight gain” or “obesity,” lawsuits pertaining to other food related violations are not affected.

H.R. 3717 - Broadcast Decency Enforcement Act of 2004: *A summary of this legislation was not available at time of publication.*

- * **Possible Motions to go to Conference**
- * **Possible Motions to Instruct Conferees**

FRIDAY, MARCH 12, 2004

On Friday, no votes are expected in the House.

Historical Tidbits

On March 8 ...

1790 - George Washington delivered the first State of the Union address.

1880 - U.S. President Rutherford B. Hays declared that the United States would have jurisdiction over any canal built across the Isthmus of Panama.

1917 - The U.S. Senate voted to limit filibusters by adopting the cloture rule.

1948 - The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that religious instruction in public schools was unconstitutional.

1999 - The U.S. Supreme Court upheld the conviction of Timothy McVeigh for the bombing of a federal building in Oklahoma City in 1995.

On March 9 ...

1820 - The U.S. Congress passed the Land Act that paved the way for westward expansion of North America.

1832 - Abraham Lincoln announced that he would run for a political office for the first time. He was unsuccessful in his run for a seat in the Illinois state legislature.

1933 - The U.S. Congress began its 100 days of enacting New Deal legislation.

1989 - The U.S. Senate rejected John Tower as a choice for a cabinet member. It was the first rejection in 30 years.

1990 - Dr. Antonia Novello was sworn in as the first female and Hispanic U.S. surgeon general.

On March 10 ...

1776 - "Common Sense" by Thomas Paine was published.

1848 - The U.S. Senate ratified the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which ended the war with Mexico.

1864 - Ulysses S. Grant became commander of the Union armies in the U.S. Civil War.

1971 - The U.S. Senate approved an amendment to lower the voting age to 18.

On March 11 ...

1930 - U.S. President Howard Taft became the first U.S. president to be buried in the National Cemetery in Arlington, VA.

1941 - U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt authorized the Lend-Lease Act, which authorized the act of providing war supplies to the Allies.

1964 - U.S. Senator Carl Hayden broke the record for continuous service in the U.S. Senate. He had worked 37 years and seven days.

1993 - Janet Reno was unanimously confirmed by the U.S. Senate to become the first female attorney general.

On March 12 ...

1789 - The U.S. Post Office was established.

1906 - The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that corporations must yield incriminating evidence in anti-trust suits.

1933 - U.S. President Roosevelt presented his first presidential address to the nation. It was the first of the "Fireside Chats."

1947 - U.S. President Truman established the "Truman Doctrine" to help Greece and Turkey resist Communism.

1959 - The U.S. House joined the U.S. Senate in approving the statehood of Hawaii.

1993 - In the U.S., the Pentagon called for the closure of 31 major military bases.

2002 - U.S. homeland security chief Tom Ridge unveiled a color-coded system for terror warnings.

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

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