

# **The Ehlers e-Newsletter**

Monday, March 31, 2003

## ***Last Week in the U.S. House of Representatives***

**EHLERS SUPPORTS HOUSE APPROVAL OF AMBER ALERTS** – Congressman Ehlers and a wide majority of the U.S. House of Representatives joined the Senate Thursday in approving money for a nationwide child kidnapping “Amber Alert” system. The House included a package of child protection measures by an overwhelming vote of 410-14, including “Amber” and “Code Adam” alerts designed to quickly stop kidnappers, a ban on computer-simulated child pornography and new punitive measures for sex offenses.

**HOUSE OKS LEGISLATION TO FIGHT CHILD ABUSE** – Seeking to fight the abuse of children, the U.S. House of Representatives Wednesday approved a reauthorization of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) by unanimous voice vote. The bill authorizes funding for CAPTA, the Adoption Opportunities program and the Abandoned Infants Assistance Act. It also promotes partnerships between child protective services and private and community-based organizations to provide child abuse and neglect prevention and treatment services; improves public education on the role of the child protective services system; improves the training, recruitment and retention of individuals providing services to children and families; requires child protective services personnel to advise individuals subject to a child abuse and neglect investigation of the complaint or allegation made against them; and requires states to have provisions and procedures for requiring criminal background checks for prospective foster and adoptive parents and other adult relatives and non-relatives residing in the household.

**CONGRESS DEMANDS THAT IRAQ FOLLOW GENEVA CONVENTION FOR POWs** – Responding to reports that American and British prisoners of war are being brutalized by their captors, the House of Representatives passed a resolution Wednesday calling on Iraqi authorities to adhere to the Geneva Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War. Congressman Ehlers supported the resolution, which received a 419-0 vote. The resolution also commends the bravery and professionalism of the members of the Armed Forces of the United States and the military forces of United States coalition partners, and extends heartfelt sympathies to the families and loved ones of those who are killed, wounded, missing in action, or taken prisoner by Iraqi authorities.

## **THIS WEEK IN THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

*March 31 – April 4, 2003*

### **Monday, March 31, 2003**

The House will convene 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 (5 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. 1463 - Small Pox Vaccination Compensation Fund Act** – Provides federal benefits to health care workers, public safety personnel, and smallpox response team members who suffer injury or death after receiving the vaccinia (smallpox) vaccine.
2. **H.Con.Res. 58 - Honoring the City of Fayetteville, North Carolina, and its Many Partners for the Festival of Flight** (a celebration of the centennial of Wilbur and Orville Wright's first flight, the first controlled, powered flight in history.)
3. **H.R. 1208 - Northern Ireland Peace and Reconciliation Support Act of 2003** – amends the Anglo-Irish Support Act of 1986 by authorizing \$25 million for US contributions to the International Fund for Ireland (IFI) in FY 2004 and FY 2005.
4. **H.Res. 149 - Expressing Condolences on the Assassination of the Serbian Prime Minister**
5. **H.R. 1166 - Amending the Small Business Act to Expand and Improve the Assistance Provided by Small Business Development Centers to Indian Tribe Members, Native Alaskans, and Native Hawaiians**

#### **Possible Motion to go to Conference**

#### **H.Con.Res. 95 - Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for FY 2004**

#### **Tuesday, April 1, 2003**

The House will convene at 10:30 a.m. for Morning Hour and 12 noon for legislative business.

#### **Suspensions (5 bills):**

1. **H.R. 1412 - The Higher Education Relief Opportunities for Students Act of 2003 (HEROES)** – Grants the Secretary of Education specific waiver authority within Title IV of the Higher Education Act, to provide necessary relief to those affected by the recent military mobilization and any unforeseen issues that may arise. This waiver authority addresses the need to assist students who are being called up to active duty, those active duty military being relocated, and those students and borrowers who may at some point be directly affected by action yet unknown.
2. **H.R. 622 - Coconino/Tonto National Forest Land Exchange** – Directs the Secretary of Agriculture to perform two land exchanges in the Tonto and Coconino National Forests in Arizona: the Montezuma Castle land exchange and the Diamond Point land exchange. The exchanges must be equal-value exchanges as required by Federal Land Policy And Management Act and determined through fair market appraisal in accordance with the Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal Land Acquisitions.
3. **H.R. 762 - Reasonable Right-of-Way Fees Act of 2003** – Amends the Federal Lands Policy and Management Act of 1976 to clarify the method by which the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture determine the fair market value of rights-of-way granted, issued, or renewed under the Act.
4. **H.R. 289 - Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge Complex Expansion and Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge Expansion Act** – Expands the boundaries

of the Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge Complex and the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge.

5. **H.Con.Res. 109 - Expressing the Sense of the Congress Regarding the Blue Star Banner and the Gold Star** – Calls on all Americans to honor the men and women of the United States Armed Forces and their families. It also encourages these families to proudly display the Blue Star Banner or, if their loved one has made the ultimate sacrifice, the Gold Star.

**Wednesday, April 2, 2003 and the balance of the week**

The House will meet at 10:00 a.m. for legislative business.

**Suspension (1 bill):**

1. **H.R. 758 - Business Checking Freedom Act of 2003** – Repeals the prohibition on the payment of interest on commercial demand deposits, increase the number of interaccount transfers which may be made from business accounts at depository institutions, and authorize the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System to pay interest on reserves.

**Bills Subject to a Rule (4 bills):**

**H.R. 522 - Federal Deposit Insurance Reform Act of 2003** – Preserves the value of insured deposits at insured depository institutions, advance the national priority of enhancing retirement security for all Americans, and ensure that the value, benefit and costs of deposit insurance are allocated equitably and fairly. The bill merges the Bank Insurance Fund (BIF) and the Savings Association Insurance Fund (SAIF); increases the standard maximum deposit insurance limit from \$100,000 to \$130,000, and indexes it every 5 years for inflation; doubles the new coverage level for certain retirement accounts; and increases the coverage amount for in-State municipal deposits. Federally chartered credit unions are provided with parity in general standard maximum deposit insurance coverage, coverage for retirement accounts and municipal deposits.

**H.R. 735 - Postal Civil Service Retirement System Funding Reform Act of 2003** – Reforms the manner by which the United States Postal Service (USPS) funds its obligations to the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS), by modeling the Postal Service's funding of its CSRS obligation after its funding of the Federal Employee Retirement System (FERS). This will result in considerable savings to the Postal Service, and prevent postal ratepayers from unfairly subsidizing the CSRS obligations of other federal agencies.

**H.R. 743 - Social Security Protection Act of 2003** – Provides a large number of reforms to the Social Security Administration aimed at combating waste, fraud and abuse within the Social Security system.

**H.R. XXXX (bill not yet numbered) - Emergency Wartime Supplemental Appropriations Act for FY 2003** – Details not available at time of publication.

**Historical Tidbits**

**On March 31 ...**

**1854** – The U.S. government signed the Treaty of Kanagawa with Japan. The act opened the ports of Shimoda and Hakotade to American trade.

**1870** – In Perth Amboy, NJ, Thomas P. Munday became the first black to vote in the U.S.

**1917** – The U.S. purchased and took possession of the Virgin Islands from Denmark for \$25 million.

**1918** – For the first time in the U.S., Daylight Savings Time went into effect.