



## The Ehlers e-Newsletter

For the Week of May 3, 2004

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### *News from Congressman Ehlers ...*

**EHLERS VOTES AGAINST TAX INCREASE ON MARRIED COUPLES** – Congressman Vernon J. Ehlers Wednesday hailed passage of a House plan that will thwart a pending tax increase on 30 million married couples.

*For more information, please view the press release on our website:*

[http://www.house.gov/apps/list/press/mi03\\_ehlers/042804MarriagePenalty.html](http://www.house.gov/apps/list/press/mi03_ehlers/042804MarriagePenalty.html)

**EHLERS ANNOUNCES RX DRUG COMPARISON SERVICE FROM MEDICARE** – Seniors interested in using the new federally supported prescription drug discount cards, which go into effect May 3, can now see how much the cards will save them and which card is best for them thanks to a website and telephone helpline established by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Congressman Vernon J. Ehlers announced.

*For more information, please view the press release on our website:*

[http://www.house.gov/apps/list/press/mi03\\_ehlers/042904MedicareCard.html](http://www.house.gov/apps/list/press/mi03_ehlers/042904MedicareCard.html)

**41 AREA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS HONORED BY EHLERS** – Congratulating them for their dedication to their schoolwork and for their contributions to their schools and communities, Congressman Vernon J. Ehlers Saturday presented his annual Medal of Merit awards to 41 area graduating high school seniors.

*For more information, please view the press release on our website:*

[http://www.house.gov/apps/list/press/mi03\\_ehlers/050304MedalofMerit2004.html](http://www.house.gov/apps/list/press/mi03_ehlers/050304MedalofMerit2004.html)

**EKHS SENIOR WINS 2004 CONGRESSIONAL ARTS COMPETITION** – Beating out 52 other entries, Monica Marcoux's depiction of the Eiffel Tower was announced Saturday as the winner of the 2004 Congressional Arts Competition for the Third Congressional District of Michigan.

*For more information, please view the press release on our website:*

[http://www.house.gov/apps/list/press/mi03\\_ehlers/050404ArtsComp2004.html](http://www.house.gov/apps/list/press/mi03_ehlers/050404ArtsComp2004.html)

*To view photos of the winning entries, click here:*

[http://www.house.gov/ehlers/photo\\_gallery/photo\\_pages/050104\\_congressional\\_arts.html](http://www.house.gov/ehlers/photo_gallery/photo_pages/050104_congressional_arts.html)

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

## **MONDAY, MAY 3, 2004**

*On Monday, the House is not in session.*

## **TUESDAY, MAY 4, 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 (6 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. 598 - Recognizing the valuable contributions of military impacted schools, teachers, administration, and staff for their ongoing contributions to the education of military children:** Resolves that the House of Representatives: (1) recognizes the contributions of the teachers, administration, and staff of Military Impacted Schools and the Department of Defense Education Activity schools world-wide; and (2) commends the teachers in military impacted communities who work on the front lines at home to educate students during times of peace and times of conflict.
- 2) **H.Res. 600 - Congratulating charter schools and their students, parents, teachers, and administrators across the U.S. for their ongoing contributions to education:** Resolves that: (1) the House of Representatives acknowledges and commends charter schools and their students, parents, teachers, and administrators across the United States for their ongoing contributions to education and improving and strengthening our public school system; (2) the House of Representatives supports the fifth annual National Charter Schools Week; and (3) it is the sense of the House of Representatives that the President should issue a proclamation calling on the people of the United States to conduct appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities to demonstrate support for charter schools during this week long celebration in communities throughout the United States.
- 3) **H.Con.Res. 380 - Recognizing the benefits and importance of school-based music education:** Resolves by Congress that: (1) it is the sense of the Congress that music education grounded in rigorous instruction is an important component of a well-rounded academic curriculum and should be available to every student in every school; and (2) the Congress recognizes the International Music Products Association for its efforts to designate a Music Education Month in order to highlight the important role that school music programs play in the academic and social development of children.
- 4) **H.Res. 599 - Congratulating the University of Connecticut Huskies for winning the 2004 NCAA Division I men and women's basketball championships**
- 5) **H.Con.Res. 408 - Congratulating the University of Denver men's hockey team for winning the 2004 NCAA men's hockey national championship**
- 6) **H.Res. 594 - Congratulating the Kennesaw State University Owls for winning the 2004 NCAA Division II Men's Basketball National Championship**

## **WEDNESDAY AND THURSDAY, MAY 5 AND 6, 2004**

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

**Suspensions (6 bills):**

- 1) **H.Res. 605 - Recognizing the importance of increasing awareness of autism, supporting programs for increased research and improved treatment of autism, improving training and support for individuals with autism and those who care for individuals with autism.**
- 2) **H.R. 2771 - To amend the Safe Drinking Water Act to reauthorize the New York City Watershed Protection Program:** Reauthorizes the New York City Watershed Protection Program, contained in section 1443(d)(4) of the Safe Drinking Water Act, through fiscal year 2010. The program provides for the protection and enhancement of source water for the New York City water supply system, including projects necessary for compliance with the criteria established for a filtration avoidance determination issued by the Environmental Protection Agency.
- 3) **H.R. 27 - Small Public Housing Authority Act:** Exempts small Public Housing Authorities (PHAs), which are defined as having 100 or fewer public housing units, from being required to submit an annual plan to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Under the legislation, PHAs who are exempt from the annual planning requirement would still have to do a five-year plan. Moreover, a small PHA, which is designated as a troubled housing agency by HUD, would still be required to submit an annual plan. This legislation is needed to simply provide some regulatory burden relief to small PHAs which do not have the time, staff or resources to do these HUD annual plans by themselves. Many of these small PHAs only have a part-time executive director. Currently, small PHAs are forced to hire consultants since they do not have the computer software package to help complete these annual plans. These consultants are an expensive cost for small PHAs which already are facing numerous fiscal challenges.
- 4) **H.Res. 402 - Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding the urgent need for freedom, democratic reform, and international monitoring of elections, human rights, and religious liberty in the Lao People's Democratic Republic.**
- 5) **H.Con.Res. 326 - Expressing the sense of Congress regarding the arbitrary detention of Dr. Wang Bingzhang by the Government of the People's Republic of China and urging his immediate release:** Expresses the sense of Congress that Dr. Wang Bingzhang, a permanent resident of the United States, is being arbitrarily detained in the People's Republic of China in violation of international law. The United States Government should request the Government of the People's Republic of China to release Dr. Wang, permitting him to immediately return to the United States and the President should make the immediate release of Dr. Wang by the Government of the People's Republic of China a top priority of United States foreign policy.
- 6) **H.Con.Res. 398 - Expressing the concern of Congress over Iran's development of the means to produce nuclear weapons:** Resolves that the Congress condemns in the strongest possible terms Iran's continuing deceptions and falsehoods to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the international community about its nuclear programs and activities.

**H.R. 4227 - Middle-Class Alternative Minimum Tax Relief Act of 2004:** Extends through 2005 the higher Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT) exemption amounts enacted in the Jobs and Growth Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2003 (JGTRRA) and adjusts these amounts for inflation to protect their value. As a result, the exemption amounts for 2005 would be: \$58,950 for joint filers and \$40,900 for single taxpayers. Without enactment of H.R. 4227, the current exemption amounts will automatically fall in 2005 to \$45,000 for married couples and to \$33,750 for single taxpayers. As a result, eight million additional taxpayers would have to pay the AMT next year.

*\* Possible Motions to go to Conference*

*\* Possible Motions to Instruct Conferees*

## **FRIDAY, MAY 7, 2004**

*On Friday, no votes are expected in the House.*

### **Historical Tidbits**

#### **On May 3 ...**

**1802** - Washington, DC, was incorporated as a city.

**1921** - West Virginia imposed the first state sales tax.

**1926** - U.S. Marines landed in Nicaragua and stayed until 1933.

**1948** - The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that covenants prohibiting the sale of real estate to blacks and other minorities were legally unenforceable.

#### **On May 4 ...**

**1776** - Rhode Island declared its freedom from England two months before the Declaration of Independence was adopted.

#### **On May 5 ...**

**1862** - The Battle of Puebla took place. It is celebrated as Cinco de Mayo Day.

**1865** - The Thirteenth Amendment was ratified, abolishing slavery in the U.S.

**1987** - The U.S. congressional Iran-Contra hearings opened.

#### **On May 6 ...**

**1882** - The U.S. Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act. The act barred Chinese immigrants from the U.S. for 10 years.

**1960** - U.S. President Eisenhower signed the Civil Rights Act of 1960.

#### **On May 7 ...**

**1789** - The first U.S. Presidential Inaugural Ball was held in New York City.

**1800** - The U.S. Congress divided the Northwest Territory into two parts. The western part became the Indiana Territory and the eastern section remained the Northwest Territory (which included the area that became Michigan).

**1975** - U.S. President Ford declared an end to the Vietnam War.

**1992** - A 203-year-old proposed constitutional amendment barring the U.S. Congress from giving itself a midterm pay raise was ratified as the 27th Amendment.

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