



The Ehlers e-Newsletter

For the Week of May 10, 2004

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News from Congressman Ehlers ...

EHLERS SUPPORTS RESOLUTION CONDEMNING PRISONERS'

HUMILIATION – Congressman Vernon J. Ehlers joined with a wide, bipartisan majority of his House colleagues Thursday in condemning the abuse of Iraqi prisoners in the custody of U.S. forces and said that he is hopeful that such abuses have stopped now that they have been revealed.

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

http://www.house.gov/apps/list/press/mi03_ehlers/050604IraqCondemn.html

THIS WEEK IN THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MONDAY, MAY 10, 2004

On Monday, the House will meet at 12 noon in a Pro Forma Session.

TUESDAY, MAY 11, 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 (12 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. 608 - Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the Department of Defense should rectify deficiencies in the military postal system to ensure that members of the Armed Forces stationed overseas are able to receive and send mail in a timely manner as well as receive and send election ballots in time to be counted in the 2004 elections**
- 2) **H.R. 3939 - Mary Ann Collura Post Office Building Redesignation Act** (*Fair Lawn, New Jersey*)
- 3) **H.Res. 613 - Recognizing and honoring the tenth anniversary of Vietnam Human Rights Day:** Resolves that the House of Representatives: (1) honors and recognizes the 10th anniversary of Vietnam Human Rights Day; (2) supports the designation of a "Vietnam Human Rights Day;" and (3) urges all Americans to share in this commemoration so as to have a greater appreciation of the role Vietnam Human Rights Day has played in helping to defend and further the liberties and freedom of all Vietnamese people.

- 4) **H.Res. 622 - Supporting the goals and ideals of Peace Officers Memorial Day:** Resolves that the House of Representatives: (1) supports the goals and ideals of Peace Officers Memorial Day to honor federal, state and local peace officers killed or disabled in the line of duty; and (2) calls upon the people of the United States to observe such a day with appropriate ceremonies and respect.
- 5) **H.R. 4299 - Dr. Miguel A. Nevarez Post Office Building Designation Act**
(Edinburg, Texas)
- 6) **H.R. 2523 - Tomochichi United States Courthouse Designation Act**
(Savannah, Georgia)
- 7) **H.Con.Res. 389 - Authorizing the use of the Capitol Grounds for the D.C. Special Olympics Law Enforcement Torch Run:** Authorizes use of the Capitol Grounds for the 19th Annual Law Enforcement Torch Run, benefiting the District of Columbia Special Olympics. The Capitol Police, along with the DC Special Olympics, will participate in the torch run to be held on June 4, 2004. The DC Special Olympics will work closely with the Capitol Police and the Architect of the Capitol to see that the event is in full compliance with the rules and regulations governing the use of the Capitol Grounds.
- 8) **H.Con.Res. 352 - Recognizing the contributions of people of Indian origin to the United States and the benefits of working together with India towards promoting peace, prosperity, and freedom among all countries of the world:** Resolves that Congress: (1) honors the contributions of people of Indian origin to the United States, and (2) is committed to working together with India towards promoting peace, prosperity, and freedom among all countries of the world.
- 9) **H.Res. 577 - Recognizing 50 years of relations between the United States Government and the European Union:** Resolves that the House of Representatives: (1) celebrates the 50th anniversary of relations between the United States and the European Union; (2) commends the United States mission to the European Union and the mission of the European Commission to the United States for the professional representation of the interests of the United States and European Union over the past 50 years; (3) recognizes that continued cooperation between the United States and the European Union is essential to resolving international disputes, promoting peace, expanding global economic opportunity, combating global threats, and being prepared to respond to unforeseen events; and (4) encourages enhanced United States-European Union strategic discussion and institutional cooperation, including increased discussions between representatives of the United States Congress and the European Parliament through the Transatlantic Legislators' Dialogue.
- 10) **H.Con.Res. 378 - Calling on the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to immediately and unconditionally release Father Thaddeus Nguyen Van Ly:** Resolves by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), that Congress (A) condemns and deplores the arbitrary detention of Father Thaddeus Nguyen Van Ly by the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and calls for his immediate and unconditional release; (B) condemns and deplores the violations of freedom of speech, religion, movement, association, and the lack of due process afforded to individuals in Vietnam; (C) strongly urges the Government of Vietnam to consider the implications of its actions for the broader

relationship between the United States and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam; and (D) strongly urges the Government of Vietnam to consider the implications of its actions in the context of the United States-Vietnam Bilateral Trade Agreement under which Vietnam currently receives normal trade relations (NTR) treatment, subject to the provisions of chapter 1 of title IV of the Trade Act of 1974.

11) H.Con.Res. 409 - Recognizing with humble gratitude the more than 16,000,000 veterans who served in the United States Armed Forces during World War II and the Americans who supported the war effort on the home front and celebrating the completion of the National World War II Memorial on the National Mall in the District of Columbia

12) H.J.Res. 91 - Recognizing the 60th anniversary of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944: Resolves that Congress: (1) supports the recognition of the 60th anniversary of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, and (2) requests the President to issue a proclamation calling on the people of the United States to observe the 60th anniversary of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 12, 2004 AND THE BALANCE OF THE WEEK

On Wednesday and Thursday, the House will meet at 10 a.m. On Friday, the House will meet at 9 a.m.

H.R. 4275 - To amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permanently extend the 10-percent individual income tax rate: Maintains the size of the 10-percent bracket at \$7,000 for singles and \$14,000 for married couples. These amounts are adjusted for inflation. The bill also makes permanent the 10-percent bracket. The Joint Committee on Taxation (JCT) estimates H.R. 4275 will provide \$218 billion in tax relief over 10 years and will save the average taxpayer more than \$2,400 during the next decade.

H.R. 4279 - To amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for the disposition of unused health benefits in cafeteria plans and flexible spending arrangements: Allows up to \$500 of unused funds to be (1) carried forward in the Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA) for use during the next year, or (2) contributed to a Health Savings Account (HSA). The ability to rollover funds to the next year will encourage more employees to participate in FSAs without fear of losing the money at the end of the year. The FSA rollover option will reduce end-of-the-year excess spending and overuse of health care services. It will also allow FSA participants to benefit from the prudent use of their health care resources.

H.R. 4280 - To improve patient access to health care services and provide improved medical care by reducing the excessive burden the liability system places on the health care delivery system: Makes changes to the health care liability system, including compensation for injured patients and other issues arising out of health care law suits. The measure provides for a three-year statute of limitations with certain exceptions for minors, fraud, intentional concealment, and the presence of a foreign body. It provides for a \$250,000 cap on non-economic or "inherently unquantifiable pain and suffering" damages. Guidelines governing the award of punitive damages provide that awards not exceed the greater of \$250,000 or twice economic damages. Damages are

governed by a "fair share" rule, by which damages are allocated fairly, in direct proportion to fault.

H.R. 4281 - To amend title I of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 to improve access and choice for entrepreneurs with small businesses with respect to medical care for their employees: Makes changes to the health care liability system, including compensation for injured patients and other issues arising out of health care law suits. The measure provides for a three-year statute of limitations with certain exceptions for minors, fraud, intentional concealment, and the presence of a foreign body. It provides for a \$250,000 cap on non-economic or "inherently unquantifiable pain and suffering" damages. Guidelines governing the award of punitive damages provide that awards not exceed the greater of \$250,000 or twice economic damages. Damages are governed by a "fair share" rule, by which damages are allocated fairly, in direct proportion to fault.

** Possible Motions to go to Conference*

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Historical Tidbits

On May 10 ...

1773 - The English Parliament passed the Tea Act, which taxed all tea in the U.S. colonies.

1775 - Ethan Allen and Colonel Benedict Arnold led an attack on the British Fort Ticonderoga and captured it from the British.

1872 - Victoria Woodhull became the first woman nominated for the U.S. presidency.

On May 12 ...

1978 - The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration announced that they would no longer exclusively name hurricanes after women.

On May 13 ...

1846 - The U.S. declared that war already existed with Mexico.

1865 - The last land engagement of the American Civil War was fought at the Battle of Palmito Ranch in far south Texas, more than a month after Gen. Lee's surrender at Appomattox, VA.

1954 - U.S. President Eisenhower signed into law the St. Lawrence Seaway Development Act.

On May 14 ...

1787 - Delegates began gathering in Philadelphia for a convention to draw up the U.S. Constitution.

1942 - The Women's Auxiliary Army Corps (WAAC) was established by an act of the U.S. Congress.

1980 - U.S. President Carter inaugurated the Department of Health and Human Services.

1992 - Former Soviet President Mikhail S. Gorbachev addressed members of the U.S. Congress, appealing to them to pass a bill to aid the people of the former Soviet Union.

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