

The Ehlers e-Newsletter

Monday, May 12, 2003

Last Week in the U.S. House of Representatives

EHLERS CONFRONTS GRANHOLM OVER TRANSPORTATION CUTS – At a House Transportation Subcommittee hearing Wednesday, Congressman Vernon J. Ehlers expressed his concerns to Governor Jennifer Granholm about the recent deferral by MDOT of several road construction projects in West Michigan. The deferrals included a new interchange at I-96 and 36th Street that would provide travelers better access to the Gerald R. Ford International Airport. “We share the same goal – more funding for Michigan’s highways and transit systems,” Ehlers said. “But I wanted to let her know that, while I support her request for increased federal funding for Michigan roads, it is frustrating for us to have her staff suddenly alter the previously agreed-upon plans for spending the money we provide.” (*For more information, read the press release on our website at:*

http://www.house.gov/ehlers/press_releases/050703_granholm_testifies_2.html.)

HOUSE APPROVES TAX-CUT PACKAGE – In a move aimed at stimulating the U.S. economy, the House of Representatives Friday approved a package of tax-cutting measures that would reduce income tax rates for most Americans and encourage American businesses to invest in equipment that would create jobs. Congressman Ehlers supported the measure, which passed the House on a 222-203 vote. The major provisions of the bill included:

- Acceleration of 2001 across-the-board cuts for individuals, including a higher child credit and more marriage penalty relief;
- Increased depreciation for businesses (including small businesses) for purchases of new equipment; and,
- Cutting the dividend and capital gain tax rate to reduce the tax rate on dividends and capital gains to 5 percent for taxpayers in the lowest tax brackets and to 15 percent for all other taxpayers.

The U.S. Senate has yet to act on the legislation and it is expected that the House and Senate will need to work out a compromise before it becomes law. “I believe these proposals will spur economic growth by putting more money in people’s hands and giving business more capital to purchase equipment, both of which will lead to more jobs,” Congressman Ehlers said.

CONGRESSMAN EHLERS HOLDS TOWN MEETINGS IN IONIA AND HASTINGS

– Congressman Ehlers met with about 40 residents of the Third Congressional District on Saturday, May 10, as he held open town meetings in Ionia and Hastings. The congressman discussed his work in Washington and answered questions about a variety of topics. In Ionia, the congressman also had the honor of presenting the Congressional Medal of Merit to Marjorie Rodriguez, a senior at Portland High School, who was unable to attend a May 3 award ceremony in Grand Rapids.

THIS WEEK IN THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MONDAY, MAY 12, 2003

On Monday, the House will not be in session.

TUESDAY, MAY 13, 2003

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 (7 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. 517 - To direct the Commandant of the Coast Guard to convey the Coast Guard Cutter BRAMBLE, upon its scheduled decommissioning, to the Port Huron Museum of Arts and History located in Port Huron, Michigan, for use for education and historical display**
- 2) **H.Con.Res. 128 - Authorizing the use of the Capitol Grounds for the D.C. Special Olympics Law Enforcement Torch Run**
- 3) **H.R. 281 - Tony Hall Federal Building and United States Courthouse Designation Act (Dayton, OH)**
- 4) **H.Res. 178 - Honoring the life and work of former Speaker of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives Matthew J. Ryan and offering the deepest condolences of the United States House of Representatives to his wife and family on his death**
- 5) **H.R. 985 - Delbert L. Latta Post Office Building Designation Act (Bowling Green, OH)**
- 6) **H.Con.Res. 160 - Expressing the sense of Congress that the United Nations should remove the economic sanctions against Iraq completely and without condition**
- 7) **H.Res. 222 - Commending those individuals who contributed to the debris collection effort following the Space Shuttle Columbia accident**

WEDNESDAY, MAY 14, 2003

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

Suspensions (6 bills):

- 1) **S. 870 - To amend the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to extend the availability of funds to carry out the fruit and vegetable pilot program**
- 2) **H.R. 1577 - To designate the visitors` center in Organ Pipe National Monument in Arizona as the "Kris Eggle Memorial Visitors` Center"**
- 3) **H.R. 1012 - Carter G. Woodson Home National Historic Site Establishment Act of 2003 (Washington, DC)**
- 4) **H.R. 856 - To authorize the Secretary of the Interior to revise a repayment contract with the Tom Green County Water Control and Improvement District No. 1, San Angelo project, Texas**
- 5) **H.R. 255 - To authorize the Secretary of the Interior to grant an easement to facilitate access to the Lewis and Clark Interpretative Center in Nebraska City, Nebraska**

6) H.R. 192 - To amend the Microenterprise for Self-Reliance Act of 2000 and the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to increase assistance for the poorest people in developing countries under microenterprise assistance programs under those Acts

H.R. 1000 - Pension Security Act of 2003: To amend title I of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 and the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide additional protections to participants and beneficiaries in individual account plans from excessive investment in employer securities and to promote the provision of retirement investment advice to workers managing their retirement income assets.

THURSDAY, MAY 15, 2003

On Thursday, the House will meet at 9 a.m. and recess immediately for the purpose of receiving former Members of Congress. Upon the completion of the meeting, the House will reconvene for legislative business.

H.R. 1527 - National Transportation Safety Board Reauthorization: To amend title 49, United States Code, to authorize appropriations for the National Transportation Safety Board for fiscal years 2003 through 2006.

FRIDAY, MAY 16, 2003

On Friday, no votes are expected in the House.

Historical Tidbits

On May 12 ...

1865 – The last land battle of the American Civil war occurred at Palmito Ranch, Texas.

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

On May 13 ...

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

1968 - Peace talks between the U.S. and North Vietnam began in Paris.

On May 14 ...

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

1973 - *Skylab One* was launched into orbit around Earth as the first U.S. manned space station.

On May 15 ...

1862 - The U.S. Congress created the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

On May 16 ...

1866 - The U.S. Congress authorized the first 5-cent piece to be minted.

1868 - U.S. President Andrew Johnson was acquitted during the Senate impeachment, by one vote.

(Please do not respond to this e-mail. To send a message to Congressman Ehlers, please visit our website at <http://www.house.gov/ehlers> and click on "Write Your Rep.")