



The Ehlers e-Newsletter

For the Week of May 31, 2004

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News from Congressman Ehlers ...

EHLERS CONSTITUENT SERVICES DIRECTOR NANCY OSTAPOWICZ RETIRES AFTER 25 YEARS' WORK (*Courtesy The Grand Rapids Press*) - The Rev. Peter Chukwu still might be stuck in Nigeria if not for Nancy Ostapowicz, the constituent director in U.S. Rep. Vern Ehlers' local office. Ostapowicz maneuvered through a maze of bureaucracy to help Chukwu, a priest at Grand Rapids' Holy Spirit Parish who lost his passport while visiting his family in 2002, retrieve his international papers and return to Grand Rapids after being in limbo for eight months.

For the complete story, please follow this link to The Grand Rapids Press website:

<http://www.mlive.com/news/grpress/index.ssf?/base/news-15/1085825967104340.xml>

EHLERS OFFERS BILL TO AID GREAT LAKES RESTORATION - Seeking to advance efforts to clean up and protect the Great Lakes, Congressman Vernon J. Ehlers introduced legislation that would pull together international, federal, state and local initiatives aimed at managing the world's largest source of freshwater.

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

http://www.house.gov/apps/list/press/mi03_ehlers/052004GreatLakesRestoration.html

THIS WEEK IN THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MONDAY, MAY 31, 2004

On Monday, the House is not in session.

TUESDAY, JUNE 1, 2004

On Tuesday, the House will meet at 2 p.m. for legislative business.

Suspensions (11 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.Con.Res. 295 - Congratulating and saluting Focus: HOPE on the occasion of its 35th anniversary and for its remarkable commitment and contributions to Detroit, the State of Michigan, and the United States**
- 2) **H.Res. 612 - Recognizing and honoring the firefighters, police, public servants, civilians, and private businesses who responded to the devastating fire in Richmond, Virginia, on March 26, 2004**

- 3) **H.Con.Res. 417 - Honoring the Tuskegee Airmen and their contribution in creating an integrated United States Air Force, the world's foremost Air and Space Supremacy Force**
- 4) **H.J.Res. 93 - Recognizing the 60th anniversary of the Allied landing at Normandy during World War II**
- 5) **H.R. 4317 - To name the Department of Veterans Affairs outpatient clinic located in Lufkin, Texas, as the "Charles Wilson Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic"**
- 6) **H.R. 4060 - Health, Safety, and Security of Peace Corps Volunteers Act of 2004:** Addresses safety and security issues in the Peace Corps by establishing a more independent Inspector General of the Peace Corps; establishing an Ombudsman of the Peace Corps; establishing an Office of Safety and Security; requiring a report on medical screening and placement of volunteers; exempting Inspector General, safety and security personnel, and key medical personnel from the "five year rule"; and requiring a GAO report on the impact of the 'five year rule' on the effectiveness of the Peace Corps in achieving its mission.
- 7) **H.R. 4061 - Assistance for Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children in Developing Countries Act of 2004:** Amends the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to replace the program of assistance to disadvantaged children in Asia with a program of assistance for orphans and vulnerable children in developing countries.
- 8) **H.R. 265 - Mount Rainier National Park Boundary Adjustment Act of 2003:** Authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to acquire from willing owners certain privately owned land, and transfers specified national forest lands to the Secretary's administrative jurisdiction, for inclusion in Mount Rainier National Park.
- 9) **H.R. 2912 - To reaffirm the inherent sovereign rights of the Osage Tribe to determine its membership and form of government:** Declares the term legal membership in the Osage Allotment Act of June 28, 1906 means the persons eligible for allotments of Osage Reservation lands and a pro rata share of the Osage mineral estate in Pawhuska, Oklahoma, as provided in such Act, not membership in the Osage Tribe, for all purposes.
- 10) **S. 1233 - National Great Black Americans Commemoration Act of 2003:** Authorizes \$15 million to be made available until expended, via a grant from the Office of Justice Programs of the Department of Justice, to pay the "Federal share," which cannot exceed 25 percent of the total cost for expanding and creating the National Great Blacks in Wax Museum and Justice Learning Center. Such funds may only be used for design, planning, furnishing, and equipping.
- 11) **S. 618 - Western Shoshone Claims Distribution Act:** Provides for the per capita distribution of shares of specified funds appropriated in satisfaction of a judgment award granted to the Western Shoshone Indians in Docket Number 326-K before the Indian Claims Commission (ICC) to U.S. citizens who have at least 1/4 Western Shoshone blood and who are enrolled on a Western Shoshone judgment roll to be established by the Secretary of the Interior.

WEDNESDAY AND THURSDAY, JUNE 2 AND 3, 2004

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

Suspensions (8 bills):

- 1) **H.R. 4409 - To reauthorize title II of the Higher Education Act of 1965:**
Aligns teacher training programs with the No Child Left Behind Act; increases accountability to ensure states, schools, and prospective teachers have access to reliable information on the quality of teacher training programs; boosts teacher recruitment efforts; and strengthens community partnerships that help produce highly qualified teachers for America 's schools.
- 2) **H.R. 4410 - To increase the amount of student loans that may be forgiven for highly qualified teachers in mathematics, science, and special education and for reading specialists:** More than triples the loan forgiveness available to math, science, and special education teachers, along with reading specialists, who serve in high-need schools for five years. For highly qualified teachers in these high-demand subjects, the bill will provide up to \$17,500 in loan forgiveness. That is more than triple the \$5,000 in current law, and will provide a strong incentive to assist states and schools recruit and retain the highly qualified teachers they need.
- 3) **H.R. 4411 - To amend title VII of the Higher Education Act of 1965 to ensure graduate opportunities in postsecondary education:** Places a priority on the areas of math, science, and special education for graduate fellowship programs in the Higher Education Act. To increase faculty in these high-demand subject areas, the Priorities for Graduate Studies Act will target Federal aid for graduate studies to these subject areas. The shortage of highly qualified math, science, and special education teachers extends beyond the nation's K-12 classrooms. A lack of faculty at the graduate level to train the teachers of tomorrow is also contributing to these shortages, and must be addressed to fortify the pipeline of highly qualified teachers.
- 4) **H.R. 3908 - To provide for the conveyance of the real property located at 1081 West Main Street in Ravenna, Ohio:** Transfers a property purchased with federal funds to Portage County, Ohio. The state had used the building as an employment services center and to operate the unemployment system. As the state transitions fully to using county-based once-stop career centers under Workforce Investment Act (WIA), which include the employment services provided through the Wagner-Peyser Act, the state no longer needs a separate employment services facility. The county would like to locate their new one-stop center in this facility, but given financial difficulties the county cannot afford to purchase it from the state/federal government. This bill would transfer all rights to the county.
- 5) **H.Con.Res. 413 - Honoring the contributions of the women, symbolized by "Rosie the Riveter," who served on the homefront during World War II**
- 6) **H.R. 4109 - Simple Tax for Seniors Act:** Requires the Internal Revenue Service to offer a simplified tax form for seniors, similar to Form 1040EZ. The form would be designated "Form 1040S," and it would be available for use in filing 2005 returns.
- 7) **H.R. 1086 - Standards Development Organization Advancement Act of 2003:** Clarifies the treatment of specific voluntary consensus standard-setting activities under the antitrust laws in order to eliminate perceived obstacles to their development and implementation, and permit for the recovery of attorneys fees

for substantially prevailing parties. The bill amends the National Cooperative Research Act of 1984 (NCRA) to limit recovery of antitrust damages against standard development organizations (SDOs) if such organizations disclose the scope and nature of their development activities to relevant federal antitrust authorities. H.R. 1086 seeks to codify the consensus view in existing law that properly structured voluntary standard-setting activities be judged under the “rule of reason.” This legislation, which has broad bipartisan support, would not immunize SDOs from the antitrust law; rather it would subject their activities to the rule of reason, allow plaintiffs to recover only actual damages for alleged injuries resulting from anticompetitive conduct of SDOs.

- 8) **H.R. 3866** - Anabolic Steroid Control Act of 2004: Adds several new substances to the list of banned substances and provide increased penalties for any individual who traffics in steroids within 1,000 feet of an athletic facility. In addition, the legislation includes a requirement that the Department of Health and Human Services report back to the Committee on Energy and Commerce and the House and Senate Committees on the Judiciary within two years with recommendations regarding the need to add additional dangerous substances to the list.

H.J.Res. 83 - Proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States regarding the appointment of individuals to fill vacancies in the House of Representatives:

Requires an individual, who is elected to serve as a Member of the House of Representatives for a Congress, before taking the oath of office, to present to the chief executive of the state from which the individual is elected a list of at least two qualified nominees to take the individual’s place in the event he or she dies or becomes incapacitated before the individual’s term of office expires. Allows the individual, after such oath, to revise the list at any time during a Congress.

H.R. 444 - Back to Work Incentive Act of 2003: Offers new assistance for unemployed workers. Similar to a pilot proposal offered earlier this year, the bill allows demonstration and pilot project funding under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) to be used by states and local workforce investment boards to offer personal re-employment accounts (PRAs) of up to \$3,000 to help unemployed Americans return to work quickly.

FRIDAY, JUNE 4, 2004

On Friday, no votes are expected in the House.

Historical Tidbits

On May 31 ...

1854 - The Kansas-Nebraska Act passed by the U.S. Congress.

1900 - U.S. troops arrived in Peking to help put down the Boxer Rebellion.

1913 - The 17th Amendment went into effect. It provided for popular election of U.S. senators.

1955 - The U.S. Supreme Court ordered that all states must end racial segregation “with all deliberate speed.”

1988 - U.S. President Ronald Reagan arrived in Moscow in an effort to relieve Cold War tensions. He was the first president to do so in 14 years.

1994 - The U.S. announced it was no longer aiming long-range nuclear missiles at targets in the former Soviet Union.

On June 1 ...

1789 - The first U.S. congressional act on administering oaths became law.

1861 - The first skirmish of the U.S. Civil War took place at the Fairfax Court House, Virginia.

On June 2 ...

1851 - Maine became the first U.S. state to enact a law prohibiting alcohol.

1886 - Grover Cleveland became the first U.S. president to get married while in office.

1924 - All American Indians were granted U.S. citizenship by the U.S. Congress.

On June 3 ...

1800 - John Adams moved to Washington, DC. He was the first President to live in what later became the capital of the United States.

On June 4 ...

1919 - The U.S. Senate passed the Women's Suffrage bill.

1947 - The House of Representatives approved the Taft-Hartley Act. The legislation allowed the President of the United States to intervene in labor disputes.

2003 - The U.S. House of Representatives passed a bill that would ban "partial birth" abortions with a 282-139 vote.

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