

Week Ending November 20, 2004

Congresswoman Carolyn Cheeks Kilpatrick, Michigan's 13th District

Hill News

News From The Office of Congresswoman Carolyn Cheeks Kilpatrick

This Week In Congress (lame duck session):

REPUBLICAN RULE CHANGE

This week Republicans voted to end its rule requiring leaders to step down if indicted. This was a move to protect Republican Leader Tom Delay of Texas in the event that criminal charges are brought against him in a case of alleged illegal donations to a political action committee in Texas. Three of Delay's closest fundraising aids and eight corporations have already been indicted. Delay was recently admonished by the House Committee on Standards of Official Conduct for his role in the Texas redistricting. In the 108th Congress, GOP conference rules require a leader to step aside temporarily if indicted on a felony charge that carries a prison term of two or more years.

VETERANS AFFAIRS HEALTH CARE PERSONNEL ENHANCEMENT ACT, 2004 S.2484

This bill will improve pay for doctors and dentists in order to improve recruiting and retention of top quality doctors and dentists to care for the nation's sick and disabled veterans.

VETERANS BENEFITS IMPROVEMENTS ACT 2004, S.2486

This measure provides an additional monthly payment of \$250 in dependency and indemnity compensation to veterans' surviving spouse with one or more children under the age of 18. The additional benefit would be paid for a two-year period beginning on the date the entitlement commences. It enhances education, medical and employment benefits for veterans and their families. The measure was approved by a voice vote.

VETERANS HEALTH PROGRAMS IMPROVEMENT ACT, 2004, H.R. 3936

This legislation will increase the authorization for the homeless assistance program. It extends eligibility for specifically adapted housing grants to veterans with permanent and total service-connected disabilities due to the loss, or loss of use of both arms at or above the elbows. It increases the maximum VA home loan guaranty for construction or purchase of a home to the Freddie Mac limit \$333,700. It also eliminates veterans' co-payments for hospice care furnished by the Department of Veterans Affairs. The bill was approved by a voice vote.

PUBLIC DEPT LIMIT INCREASE S. 2986

This legislation raises the debt limit by a total of \$800 billion to \$8.18 trillion. This is the third increase in the debt limit in four years. The federal debt limit was increased by \$450 billion in 2002 and by \$984 billion in 2003, the largest debt limit increase in history. The Senate passed the bill Wednesday by a vote of 52-44.

INTERNET TAX BAN S. 150

This bill bans state taxes on all forms of consumer Internet access and Internet service providers through November 1, 2007. A previous ban expired on November 1, 2003. This measure allows states that imposed taxes on Internet access prior to October 1998 to collect those taxes through November 2007. The bill passed voice vote.

OMNIBUS APPROPRIATIONS H.R. 4818

The measure funds foreign operations, VA-HUD, Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, Commerce, Justice, State, Transportation, Treasury, Legislative Branch, Interior, Energy Water and Agriculture. The bill passed the House on Saturday and went to the Senate for passage, but Senators found a provision within the bill that would allow the chairmen of the House and Senate appropriations committees or their staffers, to examine the tax returns of any American. The bill must now come back to the House for revision.

9/11 IMPLEMENTATION ACT S.2845

This bill creates a director of national intelligence who would coordinate and oversee the 15 agencies that make up the intelligence community and have budgetary authority over spending. It also creates a counter-terrorism center and amends immigration laws to fight terrorism. The bill was pulled from the House floor on Saturday and Members are expected to vote on the legislation when we return on December 6th.

ON POINT RETURNS

My television show "On Point" has resumed production now that the election is over. "On Point" is show on Comcast Detroit, Comcast Woodhaven and Wyandotte Cable.

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