

Further, as the bill before us, H.R. 207, provides, we must also ensure that those physicians that have our lives in their hands are treated fairly and equitably.

This bill is supported by the Federal Physicians Association, the American Medical Association, and the American Academy of Family Physicians, and the National Treasury Employees Union.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of our Members to join me and give this bill their support.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, in 1997, I commissioned a GAO study to review the PCA and its usefulness, and the report that was submitted confirmed that the Physicians Comparability Allowance is critical. In addition, H.R. 207 has been endorsed, as we have heard, by the American Medical Association, the American Osteopathic Association, the American Academy of Family Physicians, a number of State Medical Societies, as well as a number of our employee unions.

In the last several years, I have heard from thousands of Federal physicians across the country who have stated very clearly that, without the PCA, they would have chosen a different career. The permanent PCA extension, coupled with the inclusion of a physician's PCA in his or her average pay for purposes of computing retirement, demonstrates that Congress is serious about maintaining the quality of care that presently exists within our Federal agencies.

The government cannot pay physicians on the same scale as physicians employed in hospitals, HMOs, and universities. But passage of H.R. 207 shows that the government will make every effort to recruit and retain highly trained and well-qualified physicians. I certainly applaud its passage this evening.

I do want to take this opportunity to thank the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SCARBOROUGH), the chairman of the Subcommittee on Civil Service, his staff director Gary Ewing, as well as the gentleman from Indiana (Chairman BURTON) of the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight and his staff aid Dan Moll for their support in expediting consideration of the resolution.

I also want to thank the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS), the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Civil Service, the gentleman from California (Mr. WAXMAN), ranking member of the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight, for their support.

In addition, Ted Newland and Harry Wolf of OPM were very helpful in working with us to recraft this legislation to ensure that there were no inequities written into the bill. I also want to point out the instrumental roles that

Dennis Boyd and Richard Granville played in drafting and helping us to pass this legislation. Finally, I have to thank my diligent staff assistance, Jordi Hannum, and Ed Leong of Legislative Counsel for his tireless efforts in advising my staff.

So I ask for unanimous passage of this very important legislation.

Mr. DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to be able to rise today in support of my good friend from Maryland, Mrs. MORELLA's bill, that will help improve pay and retirement conditions for physicians employed by the Federal Government.

The bill, H.R. 207, corrects a number of problems with the current pay structure for Title 5 physicians. For one, it would permanently extend the Physicians Comparability Allowance (PCA), eliminating the need to reauthorize this language every three years. Additionally, the bill would include the physician's PCA as part of their base, average pay for the purpose of computing their retirement benefits, thus allowing them to boost their retirement contributions. This is not a new, unique benefit for physicians in the federal government, this is simply extending a formula Title 37 and 38 physicians have had for years.

H.R. 207 is a bill seeking pay equity for all physicians within the federal government. It is important to note that physicians under Title 5 are the same that are working on cures for cancer, AIDS, and heart disease; protecting the safety of our food and prescription drugs; and providing direct medical care to federal employees, and their dependents, in the State and Defense Departments. It is truly unfortunate that the government cannot pay physicians on the same scale as the private sector, but amending the PCA for Title 5 physicians will provide some compensation to offset the loss in income they have willingly accepted to become public servants.

I ask all my colleagues to join the American Medical Association, the American Academy of Family Physicians, and a continually growing list of State medical societies (including my home state of Virginia), in supporting this important legislation. I want to thank the gentlelady from Maryland for her persistence and leadership on this matter, and hope this bill will be supported by this House.

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SUNUNU). The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 207, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read:

"A bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to make permanent the authority under which comparability allowances may be paid to Government physicians, and to provide that such allowances be treated as part of basic pay for retirement purposes."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PROVIDING FOR SPECIAL IMMIGRANT STATUS FOR CERTAIN U.S. INTERNATIONAL BROADCASTING EMPLOYEES

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill (S. 3239) to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to provide special immigrant status for certain United States international broadcasting employees.

The Clerk read as follows:

S. 3239

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SPECIAL IMMIGRANT STATUS FOR CERTAIN UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL BROADCASTING EMPLOYEES.

(a) SPECIAL IMMIGRANT CATEGORY.—Section 101(a)(27) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(27)) is amended—

(1) by striking "or" at the end of subparagraph (K);

(2) by striking the period at the end of subparagraph (L); and

(3) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

"(M) subject to the numerical limitations of section 203(b)(4), an immigrant who seeks to enter the United States to work as a broadcaster in the United States for the International Broadcasting Bureau of the Broadcasting Board of Governors, or for a grantee of the Broadcasting Board of Governors, and the immigrant's accompanying spouse and children."

(b) NUMERICAL LIMITATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 203(b)(4) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1153(b)(4)) is amended by inserting before the period at the end the following: ", and not more than 100 may be made available in any fiscal year to special immigrants, excluding spouses and children, who are described in section 101(a)(27)(M)".

(2) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by paragraph (1) shall apply to visas made available in any fiscal year beginning on or after October 1, 2000.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GEKAS) and the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GEKAS).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on S. 3239.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Pennsylvania?

There was no objection.

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the bill before us is one that accommodates one of the best mechanisms we have as Americans of promoting liberty, justice and freedom across the world. I refer, of course, to the utilization of the international broadcasting services that we provide to citizens of other lands. Radio Free Europe, Radio Iraq, Radio Marti, Radio Free Asia, all of these are set for the purpose of teaching other peoples how

we function as a society and inspiring them to seek in their own countries the foundations of liberty and freedom which we take for granted and which we enjoy.

The problem is that these broadcasting services have discovered that we need bilingual personnel to work in these broadcasting services. So we have to try to accommodate their coming to our country for that purpose.

The State Department seems to have a natural hurdle to that, a block, if you will, to their just flowing into our country for these purposes. So we have to establish, and this legislation does it, a special kind of visa to permit 100 of these broadcasters, 100 per year to come into our country. They are going to be invaluable as they stream into our country.

It will alleviate also, for their own personal freedom, the possibility of oppression if they are doing our work in their own countries but doing it from here. Broadcasting in their native language will get the message across, provide them with safeguards, and will foster the entire purpose of the international broadcasting services of which we are so proud.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GEKAS); and I, too, rise in support of this bill, S. 3239, which would amend the Immigration and Nationality Act, to provide special immigrant status for certain international broadcasting employees.

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S. 3239 would establish a new immigrant visa category for international broadcasting employees which would be subject to numerical limitations. It would provide a maximum of 200 visas in the first year, which would deal with the current critical shortage of international broadcasters. Then it would provide a maximum of 100 visas annually for 3 successive years. Also, it would waive the labor certification requirement for the broadcasters who receive the visas.

The people who work in the international broadcasting industry are highly skilled individuals. They must have journalistic skills. They must be fluent in a number of languages. Many times, Mr. Speaker, they are exchanging concepts of democracy and other governmental concepts to foreign countries where people are hungering after information, and so these people must have an in-depth knowledge of the people, history and cultures of other nations.

Historically it has not been possible to find a sufficient number of people in the American workforce who have this combination of skills. All of us realize, however, that this is an important effort to ensure that we do have a diverse

employee base and provide the kind of training to Americans that would provide them with the skills to be international broadcasters.

Similar to our plea as we provided 195,000 H-1B visas, it is going to be important that we train an American workforce to ensure that they too can be part of the high technology industry.

With respect to these particular visas, the availability of these visas would help to provide needed broadcasters for the Voice of America, Radio Free Asia and Radio Free Europe, or Radio Liberty. This bill would provide the assistance that the international broadcasting industry needs to continue to provide essential news coverage around the world.

Mr. Speaker, I am very glad to be able to stand here and support these special needs, as did I in our discussion on H-1B, even though we are looking to expand some additional opportunities for American workers and minorities. And I am very pleased to stand here today and support this legislation because I happen to believe in the Voice of America and Radio Free Asia and Radio Free Europe. I think that we have found that it teaches democracy in a very effective way.

At the same time, Mr. Speaker, I am certainly concerned and dismayed that my colleagues have not seen fit to support the Latino Immigration Fairness Act. That is part of the logjam that we are having in this Congress where we are not realizing that individuals who have been here working in the United States paying taxes and paying for their mortgages and sending their children to school and doing the work that America needs them do, whether it is trash pickup or whether it is waiting on them in restaurants, Mr. Speaker, we see fit in this Congress not to provide them with access to legalization.

Just the other day, we had a debate where someone got on the floor and talked about who came to this country legally and who did not come to this country legally and talking about the Statue of Liberty.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I would simply say to my colleagues that it is enormously important that, as we support these specialized non-immigrant visas for international broadcasters or high-tech industry, that we look to those common working men and women, the average working man and woman, who needs the Latino Immigration Fairness Act, and I would believe that this Congress needs to stand on the right side of this issue and stop throwing accusations against people who are hard working, who are immigrants, and who deserve to be here.

What a tragedy to be able to vote this good bill today but yet we are not able to vote for a bill that would provide the fairness to these individuals.

While I was in this debate on the floor of the House, Mr. Speaker, would you imagine that someone indicated that everyone who came to this coun-

try previous to these years came here legally.

I did want to engage in a chastising debate. But frankly, Mr. Speaker, I did not come here legally. My ancestors came here slaves. And yet, we contributed a great deal to this country. We are very proud of the fact that we did contribute, and we are still contributing. These individuals came here out of persecution, prosecution and fear of their lives, but they came here under the encouragement of the United States Government.

Just a few years ago, we gave the same kind of relief to Nicaraguans and Cubans and what happened was that we failed to do the right thing, the equitable thing and include people from Honduras, Guatemala, Haiti and Liberia. The only thing we are asking at this time, Mr. Speaker, is that we do the right thing.

So I am very pleased to support S. 3239, but I believe that we are doing a great disservice and we are undermining the high status of this body by not passing the Latino Immigration Fairness Act.

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI), a member of the Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, Export Financing and Related Programs and a very distinguished Member of this body.

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding me the time. I thank her for her great leadership on the Committee on the Judiciary on issues of fairness in relationship to our immigration policy, whether it is the H-1B visa and what the impact is on our engineers in our own country and recognition of the need for the H-1B but also for the need to educate and train our own workers, for her leadership on the immigration fairness issues, for equity for the 245(i), for parity, et cetera, in the fairness issues, and I associate myself fully with her remarks on those subjects again commending her for her tremendous leadership, her relentlessness on behalf of fairness in our immigration policy.

I thank the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) and commend her for her leadership on this issue, which is the immigration fairness issues, as well as on the health disparity issue.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GEKAS) for his leadership in assisting us with this legislation and his leadership on the Committee on the Judiciary and finally say that this bill should be passed by this body. These international broadcasters and the non-immigrant visa status that they are giving will help spread democracy around the world.

As we do that, Mr. Speaker, I could not conclude without saying, likewise,

let us share democracy with those that are reaching for freedom and justice in this country who are simply seeking access to legalization. That is thousands and thousands of immigrants who have come here fleeing persecution. And this House now stands to deny them that right by not working to pass the Latino Immigration Fairness Act. I believe that we should do that, along with S. 3239.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, only for the purpose of asking that the record show that the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH) is the prime mover of this legislation and has been involved in its foundation for a long time, along with the member of the Senate, JESSE HELMS, who has had an outstanding interest in the furtherance of this legislation.

George Fishman, the staff member for the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH) has been important in bringing this to the floor.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation which will allow the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG) to receive a limited number of special immigrant visas, 100 per year, to allow broadcasters to work in the United States for the Voice of America, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, and Radio Free Asia.

This legislation would allow the BBG to utilize a uniform visa category for all of its broadcast entities; allow the family members of those serving U.S. interests to integrate into U.S. life; and provide protection through permanent residency to those broadcasters whose lives may be threatened because they provide accurate information about dictatorships and corrupt officials abroad.

U.S. international broadcasters continue to reach societies which live under regimes that censor the information available to their citizens. Some, after serving U.S. international broadcasting, are unable to return to their countries of origin for fear of retaliation against themselves or their families.

Certain employees of Radio Free Iraq have been threatened with their lives because of the work they do to empower citizens through the free flow of accurate information.

U.S. international broadcasting remains a vital part of our international effort to encourage democracy-building abroad. Its successes precede and follow the Cold War. For example, the most recent BBG survey showed that RFE/RL was the number-one radio station among Serbians during the recent attempt to topple Slobodan Milosevic. Foreign populations rely on broadcasting sponsored by the U.S. as a lifeline in a crisis.

Recognizing this, we need to provide the means for the BBG to recruit, retain, and protect the talented individuals it employs.

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHIMKUS). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GEKAS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill, S. 3239.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof)

the rules were suspended and the Senate bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

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CHAPTER 12 EXTENSION AND BANKRUPTCY JUDGMENT ACT OF 2000

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5540) to extend for 11 additional months the period for which chapter 12 of title 11 of the United States Code is reenacted, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 5540

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Chapter 12 Extension and Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2000".

SEC. 2. AMENDMENTS.

(a) EXTENSION OF CHAPTER 12.—Section 149 of title 11 of division C of Public Law 105-277, as amended by Public Law 106-5 and Public Law 106-70, is amended—

(1) by striking "July 1, 2000" each place it appears and inserting "June 1, 2001"; and

(2) in subsection (a)—

(A) by striking "September 30, 1999" and inserting "June 30, 2000"; and

(B) by striking "October 1, 1999" and inserting "July 1, 2000".

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall take effect on July 1, 2000.

SEC. 3. BANKRUPTCY JUDGESHIPS.

(a) TEMPORARY JUDGESHIPS.—

(1) APPOINTMENTS.—The following bankruptcy judges shall be appointed in the manner prescribed in section 152(a)(1) of title 28, United States Code, for the appointment of bankruptcy judges provided for in section 152(a)(2) of such title:

(A) One additional bankruptcy judge for the eastern district of California.

(B) Four additional bankruptcy judges for the central district of California.

(C) One additional bankruptcy judge for the district of Delaware.

(D) Two additional bankruptcy judges for the southern district of Florida.

(E) One additional bankruptcy judge for the southern district of Georgia.

(F) Two additional bankruptcy judges for the district of Maryland.

(G) One additional bankruptcy judge for the eastern district of Michigan.

(H) One additional bankruptcy judge for the southern district of Mississippi.

(I) One additional bankruptcy judge for the district of New Jersey.

(J) One additional bankruptcy judge for the eastern district of New York.

(K) One additional bankruptcy judge for the northern district of New York.

(L) One additional bankruptcy judge for the southern district of New York.

(M) One additional bankruptcy judge for the eastern district of North Carolina.

(N) One additional bankruptcy judge for the eastern district of Pennsylvania.

(O) One additional bankruptcy judge for the middle district of Pennsylvania.

(P) One additional bankruptcy judge for the district of Puerto Rico.

(Q) One additional bankruptcy judge for the western district of Tennessee.

(R) One additional bankruptcy judge for the eastern district of Virginia.

(2) VACANCIES.—The first vacancy occurring in the office of a bankruptcy judge in

each of the judicial districts set forth in paragraph (1) shall not be filled if the vacancy—

(A) results from the death, retirement, resignation, or removal of a bankruptcy judge; and

(B) occurs 5 years or more after the appointment date of a bankruptcy judge appointed under paragraph (1).

(b) EXTENSIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The temporary office of bankruptcy judges authorized for the northern district of Alabama, the district of Delaware, the district of Puerto Rico, the district of South Carolina, and the eastern district of Tennessee under paragraphs (1), (3), (7), (8), and (9) of section 3(a) of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 1992 (28 U.S.C. 152 note) are extended until the first vacancy occurring in the office of a bankruptcy judge in the applicable district resulting from the death, retirement, resignation, or removal of a bankruptcy judge and occurring—

(A) 8 years or more after November 8, 1993, with respect to the northern district of Alabama;

(B) 10 years or more after October 28, 1993, with respect to the district of Delaware;

(C) 8 years or more after August 29, 1994, with respect to the district of Puerto Rico;

(D) 8 years or more after June 27, 1994, with respect to the district of South Carolina; and

(E) 8 years or more after November 23, 1993, with respect to the eastern district of Tennessee.

(2) APPLICABILITY OF OTHER PROVISIONS.—Except as provided in paragraph (1), section 3 of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 1992 (28 U.S.C. 152 note) shall continue to apply to the temporary office of bankruptcy judges referred to in such paragraph.

(c) TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS.—Section 152(a) of title 28, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1) by striking the first sentence and inserting the following:

"Each bankruptcy judge authorized to be appointed for a judicial district as provided in paragraph (2) shall be appointed by the United States court of appeals for the circuit in which such district is located."; and

(2) in paragraph (2)—

(A) in the item relating to the middle district of Georgia, by striking "2" and inserting "3"; and

(B) in the collective item relating to the middle and southern districts of Georgia, by striking "Middle and Southern 1".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GEKAS) and the gentlewoman from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GEKAS).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 5540.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Pennsylvania?

There was no objection.

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation extends the life of chapter 12 in the Bankruptcy Code as we know it today. Chapter 12 is devoted to a special kind of bankruptcy relief that is granted to the farm community and to farmers who feel the