

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MAY 18, 1971

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

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THE WHITE HOUSE  
PRESS CONFERENCE  
OF  
SENATOR ROBERT P. GRIFFIN  
AND  
CONGRESSMAN GERALD R. FORD  
THE BRIEFING ROOM



AT 10:05 A.M. EDT

MR. ZIEGLER: The Leadership meeting this morning lasted for two hours. Among the subjects discussed was, of course, the rail strike situation and the NATO troop reduction amendments.

Senator Griffin is here this morning, because Senator Scott is out of town, together with Congressman Ford. They will give you a rundown on the Leadership meeting this morning. Congressman Ford?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: Thank you, Ron.

George Shultz pointed out that a prolonging of the rail strike will have a very serious impact, growing daily, unless something is done affirmatively. If we don't get some Congressional action on the rail strike within the next 24 hours, it will have a very, very serious impact on jobs throughout the country.

In my own State of Michigan, the automobile industry will undoubtedly have to shut down by the end of the week. Already there are some indications that at least a part of the automotive industry is beginning to shut down at the present time.

Let me say very emphatically that there is no excuse whatsoever for the legislative delay in the consideration of the President's immediate proposal to put a stop order, as far as Congress is concerned, on the continuation of the rail strike.

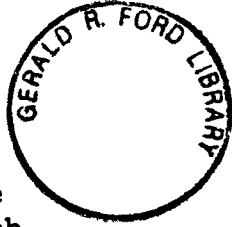
That is what we have to do right now, and we should have done it yesterday.

Secondly, however, I think it is important to point out that we are going to have in the future the same kind of temporary, superficial solutions unless this Congress acts on the President's proposal for basic legislation.

President Nixon recommended to the Congress 15 or 16 months ago permanent legislation where the labor-management problems in the rail industry and in other transportation areas would not have to come to the Congress periodically, as they have in the last two years. Unfortunately, the last Congress, and apparently this Congress, under Democratic leadership, will not hold hearings in either the House or the Senate on this legislation.

MORE

It is inexcusable that a Democratic Congress will not take affirmative action on this very, very important basic legislation. We feel very strongly that in the House and in the Senate the committees ought to take some action so that the House and Senate can work their will on this very important basic legislation which will avoid these periodic crises that we are facing now and have faced in the past in the transportation industry.



Let me make one final comment here: In the Senate they have various proposals to cut back on our troop strength in Europe, and the allegation is that this will save tax dollars, et cetera.

Let me emphasize this point: The economy of the United States will suffer more, and our tax loss will be greater by further delay in the consideration of this legislation involving the rail strike than we would ever save by a troop reduction in Europe, if that would result in any significant savings, and I condemn again a Democratic Congress that has not taken any action on basic legislation and for too long a time is delaying the consideration of the present legislation which would temporarily solve the labor-management dispute in the rail industry.

SENATOR GRIFFIN: As Jerry already indicated, the other major subject discussed at the Leadership meeting was the Mansfield amendment. We were briefed by Alexis Johnson of the State Department, and by the Defense Secretary, Melvin Laird.

It is very clear that if the Mansfield amendment should be adopted and enacted by Congress, this would be a catastrophe in terms of the progress that has been made and is being made on a number of fronts.

We are making progress, of course, in terms of the SALT talks. It would be a very serious blow in terms of the progress being made toward some kind of a meaningful settlement in the Middle East, because a cut of our troop strength in half would inevitably affect the strength of the Sixth Fleet; and furthermore, the Brezhnev statement of the other day makes clear that this is the wrong amendment at the wrong time, and would produce the wrong results in terms of achieving a mutual and balanced force reduction by agreement between NATO and the Warsaw Pact nations.

The vote is close, but we believe that on Wednesday the Senate will reject the Mansfield amendment.

Q Senator, was there any discussion of a compromise?

SENATOR GRIFFIN: There was some discussion of the various proposals. Let me say that the wording of these various proposals keeps changing almost hour by hour, and none of them are considered acceptable at the present time. I believe that we ought to go and vote on the merits of the Mansfield amendment, and that is the position of the Administration at the present time.

Q Would any compromise be acceptable at any time?

MORE

SENATOR GRIFFIN: Well, I would not be able to answer the question without seeing the wording.

MR. ZIEGLER: The President's view on that subject, however, is quite firm, as we have stated previously.

Q Sir, have you seen Secretary General Manlio Brosio's letter to the President? In the last paragraph, he states that we have a solemn commitment to our allies not to reduce our forces without mutual agreement, and also not to reduce the forces without mutual agreement with the East for a balanced reduction.

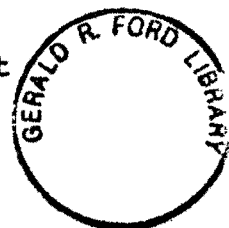
Do you consider that this is accurate, and has it been brought to Senator Mansfield's attention?

SENATOR GRIFFIN: This is, of course, a most important point, and the fact is that any change should be made by agreement in concert with our NATO allies. The most unfortunate part of the Mansfield amendment, and the various alternatives that are proposed, is that they move in the direction of precipitous, unilateral action by the United States.

The President and the Administration have been and will continue to be working in concert with our NATO allies to try to, of course, get our European allies to bear a greater share of the burden. They have been successful in that regard in the past year, but it would be unthinkable for the United States to move on a unilateral basis as proposed by the Mansfield amendment.

Q Congressman Ford, could you tell us whether the 13 black Congressmen who were in here a couple of months ago have received an answer from the President yet?

MORE



MR. ZIEGLER: As I said in Key Biscayne yesterday, we have completed the development of our response to the proposals that the Black Caucus put forward in the meeting here and we will be providing that to the Caucus Chairman and the members of the Caucus sometime today. We will make that available to the members of the press this week.

Q Congressman Ford, did George Shultz go into any detail on how the economy would be adversely affected by a continuation of the rail strike?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: There was no specific report on the details of the adverse impact on the economy if the Congress did not act immediately. But if you add up the industries which would be very, very badly hurt by no legislative action of the Congress, automobiles, steel, et cetera, it is obvious that the economy would receive a very severe jolt.

For that reason, there is no excuse whatsoever for the Congress not acting promptly on this temporary legislation. We would lose substantially in jobs, in GNP, if the Congress dilly-dallies as it has for the last 24 hours. Action has to be taken today in order to keep jobs in many, many industries and keep the economy moving upward.

I hope that both the House and Senate will act today in order to avoid this catastrophe.

SENATOR GRIFFIN: May I add, I came back from Detroit yesterday afternoon and I had an opportunity to talk with some of the automobile industry management. Chrysler Corporation was going to be required to begin closing some plants as early as this morning, if not yesterday, and a large share of the automobile industry could be closed down within 48 hours. That would, of course, mean millions and millions of jobs would be lost.

Q Senator, did the President say when and how he would give a specific answer to the Brezhnev speech of last week?

SENATOR GRIFFIN: The NATO Council will be meeting in Lisbon in two weeks and of course, the Brezhnev statement would be discussed there by our representative, again, in consultation with our NATO allies. However, every indication in the meeting was that it was a welcome statement as far as the Administration and the President are concerned.

We look forward to moving into negotiations of some kind in agreement and in concert with our NATO allies.

Q Congressman Ford, why, in the Administration viewpoint, does Congress not act on that legislation that went up more than a year ago?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: I can't read the minds of the powers that be in the House and Senate on the Democratic side, but it is incomprehensible that they wouldn't take action when we see the periodic crises that come up, including this one. I should think that a Democratic Congress would want to solve the problem in a basic way. It is inexcusable that they won't have hearings. Who they are beholden to, I don't know, but



the truth is, there is no action either on the long range solution, nor is there any apparent affirmative action on the temporary legislation that dawdled yesterday. I must assume it may not receive action today.

Q Is it a political reason? Does the Administration view it as a political stalemate or just what is the Administration feeling from a political standpoint?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: I think the Administration feels that there is foot dragging for, perhaps, some political reason, but just what that political reason is, I think the people that have control of the Congress, the Democrats, will have to answer.

Q Sir, did you gentlemen discuss with the President the imbalance of payments and, if so, how does he propose to correct it. If you did not discuss it, would you please tell us your views on how you think it should be controlled?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: There was some discussion, but let me give you my views, if I may. It was indicated that in the long range the United States is in a basically good position. We do have these temporary crises from time to time, but at the moment it would appear there has to be some reappraisal of the short range interest rates. Secondly, there has to be an attempt made to try and get additional foreign investment in a basic way in the United States.

Q Mr. Ford, the House Internal Security Committee is looking into the question of subversive influence in the peace demonstrations recently. What is your view of those demonstrations? Do you know of a subversive influence?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: I have heard knowledgeable people say that a very small number, a hard core, have had a record of subversion or anti-Americanism. However, until we get the evidence on the record, it seems to me, it is wiser to defer any specifics in that regard.

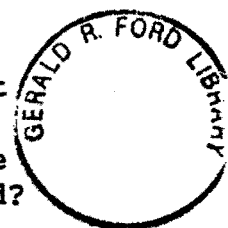
Q Congressman Ford, the foot dragging, are you referring to the present rail situation or the permanent legislation?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: I am referring to foot dragging on both the basic legislation, which would provide a mechanism for the solution of disputes between labor and management and the foot dragging on the present legislation by the Democratic Congress.

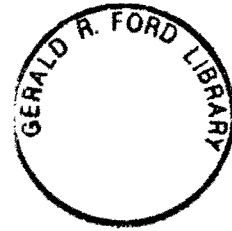
THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

(AT 10:22 A.M. EDT)



HOUSE ACTION, PERIOD MAY 4, 1971 THROUGH MAY 17, 1971



Tuesday, May 4, 1971

THE HOUSE CONSIDERED THE PRIVATE CALENDAR

RURAL TELEPHONE BANK

The House agreed to the conference report on S. 70, to amend the Rural Electrification Act of 1936, as amended, to provide an additional source of financing for the rural telephone program, clearing the measure for the White House.

PASSPORT APPLICATIONS

RULE

By a voice vote, the House adopted H. Res. 409, providing one hour of open debate.

PASSAGE

By a record vote of 240 yeas to 124 nays, the House passed S. 531, to authorize the United States Postal Service to receive the fee of \$2 for execution of an application for a passport, clearing the measure for the White House.

Wednesday, May 5, 1971

INTEREST RATES

The House agreed to the amendments of the Senate to H.R. 4246, to extend until March 31, 1973, certain provisions of law relating to interest rates, mortgage credit controls, and cost-of-living stabilization.

HARRY S. TRUMAN

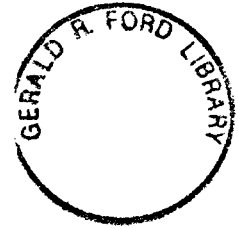
By a record vote of 379 yeas, with 1 voting "present," the House agreed to H. Res. 422, expressing the best wishes of the House of Representatives on the 87th birthday of Harry S. Truman.

PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE--LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION

Received and read a message from the President containing a recommendation for the creation of a separate Legal Services Corporation to replace the legal services program under the Office of Economic Opportunity. Referred to the Committee on Education and Labor and ordered printed (H. Doc. 92-104).

(MORE)

Wednesday, May 5, 1971 (continued)



SMALL BUSINESS

RULE

By a record vote of 381 yeas the House adopted H. Res. 423, providing one hour of open debate.

PASSAGE

By a record vote of 383 yeas, the House passed H.R. 4604, to amend the Small Business Act.

Subsequently, this passage was vacated and S. 1260, an identical Senate-passed bill, was passed in lieu, clearing the measure for the President.

Thursday, May 6, 1971

INVESTIGATIVE AUTHORITY

By a record vote of 156 yeas to 177 nays, the House rejected H. Res. 412, to authorize additional investigative authority to the Committee on Education and Labor.

Monday, May 10, 1971

DISTRICT DAY

The House considered and passed the following legislation pertaining to the District of Columbia:

School fare subsidy: H.R. 6638, to amend the act of August 9, 1955, relating to school fare subsidy for transportation of school children within the District of Columbia. (passed by voice vote)

Assaults on firemen: H.R. 5638, to extend the penalty for assault on a police officer in the District of Columbia to assaults on firemen, to provide criminal penalties for interfering with firemen in the performance of their duties. (passed by a record vote of 311 yeas)

Decedent's estates: H.R. 2594, to provide for distribution of a minor's share in a decedent's personal estate where the share does not exceed the value of \$1,000. (passed by voice vote)

Estates Act: H.R. 7931, to amend the District of Columbia Code with respect to the administration of small estates. (passed by voice vote)

Police band: H.R. 2596, to amend the act of July 11, 1947, to authorize members of the District of Columbia Fire Department, the U.S. Park Police force, and the Executive Protective Service, to participate in the Metropolitan Police Department Band. (passed by voice vote)



Tuesday, May 11, 1971

SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS

The House concluded all general debate on H.R. 8190, making supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1971; but came to no resolution thereon. Proceedings under the 5-minute rule will continue tomorrow.

Pending when the Committee of the Whole rose was an amendment by Mr. Boland designed to continue the SST.

By a record teller vote of 170 yeas to 219 nays, the House rejected an amendment by Mr. Giaimo that sought to restore the \$34.2 million subway funds for the District of Columbia.

Wednesday, May 12, 1971

SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS

PASSAGE

By a voice vote, the House passed H.R. 8190, making supplemental appropriations for fiscal year 1971.

RECOMMIT

By a voice vote, the House rejected a motion by Mr. Conte to recommit the bill to the Committee on Appropriations.

While in the Committee of the Whole, the House agreed to an amendment by Mr. Boland that continues funding for the SST (agreed to by a record teller vote of 201 yeas to 195 nays, with 2 voting "present"); after the Committee rose, on a request for a separate vote, the SST amendment was agreed to by a record vote of 201 yeas to 197 nays, with 6 voting "present."

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS

By a voice vote, the House passed H. J. Res. 633, making continuing appropriations for fiscal year 1971.

Thursday, May 13, 1971

NO LEGISLATIVE BUSINESS

Monday, May 17, 1971

THE HOUSE CONSIDERED THE CONSENT CALENDAR.

(MORE)





Monday, May 17, 1971 (continued)

SUSPENSIONS

The House voted to suspend the rules and pass the following bills:

- H.R. 7271 - Civil Rights Commission Authorization. (passed by a record vote of 262 yeas to 67 nays)
- H.R. 5257 - National School Lunch Act Amendment. (passed by a record vote of 331 yeas to 0 nays)
- H.R. 4848 - Commission on Government Procurement Extension. (passed by a voice vote)
- H.R. 6077 - Removing Certain Limitations on Lost or Stolen Bearer Securities. (passed by a voice vote)
- H.R. 7964 - Cost of Living Adjustment for Civil Service Retirement Annuities. (passed by a voice vote)
- H.R. 56 - National Environment Data System. (passed by a record vote of 304 yeas to 18 nays)
- H.R. 5060 - Penalty for Shooting Certain Birds and Fish From Aircraft. (passed by a record vote of 307 yeas to 8 nays)
- H.R. 2587 - National Advisory Committee on the Oceans and Atmosphere. (passed by a record vote of 292 yeas to 10 nays)
- H.R. 6359 - Water Resources Planning Act Amendment. (passed by a voice vote)

PROGRAM AHEAD

Tuesday, May 18, 1971, and Balance of Week

The Majority Leader, Mr. Boggs, announced that if the Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee reports emergency railroad strike legislation tomorrow it will be considered tomorrow.

PRIVATE CALENDAR

- H.R. 3613 - Emergency Employment Act of 1971  
(OPEN RULE - THREE HOURS OF DEBATE)
  - H. Res. 418 - Telephone Allowance Adjustment
  - H. Res. 420 - Postal Allowance Adjustment
  - H. Res. 429 - House Food Service Cost Adjustment
- Seven Printing Resolutions from House Administration Committee.