

WASHINGTON, D.C. JULY 22 (MS) --- REPRESENTATIVE PHILLIP BURTON'S LEGISLATIVE EXPRESS TRAIN CARRYING THE COVENANT BILL AS LUGGAGE FARED THROUGH THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES SHORTLY BEFORE NOON TODAY (MONDAY, WASHINGTON TIME) WITHOUT A SINGLE DISSENTING VOICE TO BE HEARD.

THE COVENANT LEGISLATION, UNDER THE FLOOR MANAGEMENT OF CONGRESSMAN BURTON, WAS PLACED ON THE SUSPENSION OF THE RULES CALENDAR BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF ALL THOSE PRESENT IN THE SPARSELY POPULATED HOUSE CHAMBER; IN EFFECT PASSING THE BILL.

THERE WAS A POSSIBILITY OF A CHALLENGE WHICH WOULD HAVE CAUSED THE COVENANT TO FACE A ROLL CALL VOTE. THIS THREAT DID NOT COME TO PASS AS CONGRESSMAN BURTON WORKED TO HAVE MANY OF THE COVENANT'S SUPPORTERS FROM HIS INTERIOR COMMITTEE PRESENT ON THE FLOOR.

Hearings

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FLOOR SPEECHES ON BEHALF OF THE COVENANT CAME FROM BOTH SIDES OF THE AISLE INCLUDING A MAIDEN FLOOR SPEECH BY REPRESENTATIVE SHIRLEY PETTIS, CONGRESSWOMAN FROM CALIFORNIA. THE SPEECHES WERE FILLED WITH PRAISE FOR THE MARIANAS PEOPLE AND THEIR DESIRE TO BECOME A PART OF THE "AMERICAN POLITICAL FAMILY."

REFERENCES WERE MADE TO THE TESTIMONY OF THE MARIANAS DELEGATION AND THE REMARKS OF SENATOR PEDRO A. TENORIO, DR. FRANCISCO T. PALACIOS AND DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR FRANCISCO C. ADA WERE READ INTO THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

SPEAKING TO THE JUBILANT MARIANAS DELEGATION IN A PRIVATE CAUCUS AFTER THE VOTE, CONGRESSMAN BURTON TOLD THE GROUP THAT HE COULD HAVE WON THE ROLL CALL VOTE BUT HE WOULD RATHER HAVE THE CERTAIN WIN THAN TO HAVE A BIG WIN STATISTICALLY. HE ALSO PLEDGED TO THE GROUP THAT HE WOULD REQUEST TO PERSONALLY APPEAR BEFORE THE SENATE INTERIOR COMMITTEE TO SPEAK ON BEHALF OF THE MEASURE.

WHEN QUESTIONED ABOUT THE POTENTIALLY CONTROVERSIAL SECTIONS TWO AND THREE OF THE BILL PERTAINING TO WAR CLAIMS AND EXTENSION OF FEDERAL PROGRAMS, CONGRESSMAN BURTON SAID THAT AS FAR AS HE WAS CONCERNED IT WAS ALL OR NOTHING AT ALL. HE SAID THAT HE ALSO FELT A GREAT RESPONSIBILITY TO ALL THE OTHER DISTRICTS OF MICRONESIA AND WANTED TO BE CERTAIN THAT THEY WERE TREATED FAIRLY.

BURTON ADDED THAT HE "ARDENTLY SUPPORTED EVERY DISTRICT FOR WHATEVER FUTURE STATUS THEY WANT." BURTON WAS ALSO CONFIDENT ABOUT THE COVENANT'S FUTURE BEFORE THE SENATE AND SAID THE PROCESS IS IRREVERSABLE, ALTHOUGH HE DID CAUTION THAT THE BILL WOULD MOVE MUCH MORE SLOWLY THROUGH THE SENATE.

BURTON SAID THIS WAS PRIMARILY BECAUSE THERE WERE A LARGE NUMBER OF ENERGY BILLS AND OTHER "MUST" LEGISLATION TO BE ACTED UPON BEFORE THE SENATE TAKES ITS AUGUST RECESS.

MARIANAS POLITICAL STATUS COMMISSION (MPSC) CHAIRMAN EDWARD DLG. PANGELINAN, SPEAKING ON BEHALF OF THE MARIANAS DELEGATION TOLD REPRESENTATIVE BURTON AND THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE INTERIOR COMMITTEE WHO WERE PRESENT THAT THE PEOPLE OF THE MARIANAS WERE EXTREMELY GRATEFUL AND APPRECIATIVE FOR ALL THE ASSISTANCE IN GETTING THE COVENANT THROUGH THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

PANGELINAN SAID THAT THEY HOPED TO BE "WORTHY OF THE CONFIDENCE YOU HAVE SHOWN IN US TODAY."

AFTER THE COUCUS THE MARIANAS DELEGATION MET ON THE STEPS LEADING TO THE SENATE CHAMBER WITH SENATOR HIRAM L. FONG OF HAWAII, AND SENATOR TED STEVENS OF ALASKA AND WERE PHOTOGRAPHED AS A GROUP ON WHAT WAS CALLED A "TRULY HISTORIC OCCASSION."

SENATOR FONG TOLD THE DELEGATION THAT HE HAD DISCUSSED THE COVENANT WITH MANY OF HIS SENATE COLLEAGUES AND THAT HE FELT CONFIDENT THAT THE MEASURE WOULD RECEIVE LITTLE OPPOSITION BEFORE THE U.S. SENATE.

TONIGHT (MONDAY NIGHT, JULY 21, WASHINGTON TIME), THE MARIANAS DELEGATION WILL BE ATTENDING AN EXHIBITION BASEBALL GAME BETWEEN THE DEMOCRATS AND REPUBLICAN MEMBERS OF THE CONGRESS. THE ANNUAL AFFAIR WILL PRECEDE A REGULARLY SCHEDULED BALTIMORE ORIOLES BASEBALL GAME IN BALTIMORE, MARYLAND.