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4-28-1960

Report to the People Vol. 4 No. 8

Florence P. Dwyer

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REPORT TO THE PEOPLE
FROM YOUR CONGRESSWOMAN

FLORENCE P. DWYER - 6th District, New Jersey



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FOR RELEASE:

Volume IV, Number 8

Thursday, April 28, 1960

The end of the long debate over civil rights legislation has had an effect on Congress like the warmth of the spring sun on an ice-jammed mountain river -- House and Senate bills are tumbling, like logs after a thaw, into the chambers of the two houses for debate and decision.

With only 10 weeks or so remaining of the present session of Congress, the pressure of legislative business will get heavier before it gets lighter. All of which means that Congress will probably operate on 5 and 6-day legislative weeks from now on, leaving very little opportunity for Members to return to their districts.

Just last Thursday, for instance, the House gave final approval to the Civil Rights Bill, sending it on to the President, and also passed the authorization bill for the fiscal year 1961 Mutual Security Program. It was a busy -- and a significant -- day.

The vote approving the Civil Rights Bill was 288 to 95, but many of us here who supported the bill did so with a degree of disappointment and misgiving -- disappointment that it failed to include protection for civil rights other than voting rights, and misgiving that even the voting rights provisions may be less effective in practice than on paper.

Positive Protection

On the positive side, the bill did serve to reaffirm the policy of the Federal Government that all American citizens, regardless of race or color, will be protected in the exercise of their Constitutional right to vote. Where this right is denied, the bill provides machinery for the United States to represent its citizens at each step in the process of obtaining justice.

Judging by the votes in the House over the past three years, Congressional support and opposition to our Mutual Security Program remain quite constant -- about 65 percent for and 35 percent against. Many of those on both sides have cast their votes reluctantly: reluctant to oppose the program because of its importance to our own security and the strength of the free world, reluctant to support it because of the undeniable evidences of waste, poor administration and occasionally bad judgment.

P-more--

To my mind, however, the most important fact about the Mutual Security Program is this: that every responsible and informed leader of either party -- and this includes President Eisenhower, Vice President Nixon, Governor Rockefeller, Adlai Stevenson, Democratic Senators Kennedy, Johnson, Symington and Humphrey, and the chairmen of the Republican and Democratic National Committees -- has testified to the extreme importance of this program. We simply cannot do without an effective means of stiffening the military determination and readiness of our allies, of helping the poverty-stricken peoples of the world to improve their own conditions, and of opposing the economical, political and military spread of world communism.

Necessary Attention

On the other hand, we cannot afford to sit back and accept complacently everything that is done in the name of mutual security. Any governmental endeavor of this magnitude and complexity is subject to waste and abuse. Fortunately, Congress has subjected the Mutual Security Program to the closest and most intense kind of investigation and supervision. At least eight committees of the House and Senate periodically turn the spotlight on various aspects of the program, expose mistakes and recommend ways of correcting them.

This relentless attention has been valuable. But the Mutual Security Program will continue to function properly only so long as Congress keeps it under careful scrutiny.

Sometime this week, the House is scheduled to consider another controversial subject, entitled -- somewhat questionably -- the "Emergency Home Ownership Act of 1960." Briefly, the bill is designed to encourage the building of homes by providing about a billion dollars of Federal funds with which to increase home mortgage credit and reduce interest costs.

So far as I can learn, however, there is no "emergency" in the home building field. This year should be one of the best home-building years on record. The economy is sound, and there is every reason to believe that the supply of available mortgage capital is equal to the real demand.

No Good Reason

In such a healthy economic situation, therefore, there is no good reason for inflating the demand for mortgage credit. On the contrary, it would mean risking a new round of price inflation; it would substitute Government credit for private credit; and it would endanger the balancing of the Federal budget for 1961 -- a goal desired unanimously.

As a long-time supporter of constructive Government assistance to help meet the housing needs of our people, I have no hesitation in expressing strong opposition to this bill. Government has a valid and valuable role to play in certain areas of housing, but this one at this time is not one of them.

If further proof is needed, the fact that not a single person in housing-conscious New Jersey has written me in support of this bill ought to be convincing.

To change the subject abruptly, however, I have heard from a great many constituents recently -- Union Countians taking advantage of the glorious spring weather to visit Washington. I can speak for my staff and myself when I say we are delighted to have you here. This is your Congressional office and your Nation's Capital. We want to do everything we can to help make your visit a memorable one. So please don't hesitate to ask.

Welcome to Washington!