Houghton Introduces 'Kaczynski' Crime Victim Relief Bill

Congressional Record

February 8, 1999

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Citations: H481, E155

Summary

House Ways and Means member Amo Houghton, R-N.Y., has introduced H.R. 622, which would allow taxpayers who turn in perpetrators of crimes to exclude the resulting rewards from net income if they donate the reward money to the victims or the victims' families.

Full Text

A BILL TO EXCLUDE FROM GROSS INCOME REWARDS RECEIVED BY REASON OF PROVIDING INFORMATION LEADING TO THE CONVICTION OF A CRIME TO THE EXTENT THAT THE REWARD IS USED TO COMPENSATE VICTIMS OF CRIME

HON. AMO HOUGHTON OF NEW YORK IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 8, 1999

Mr. HOUGHTON. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join my colleague from New York, Mr. McNulty, as well as a number of other colleagues, in introducing a new bill to effectively exempt from taxation the proceeds of the Federal government's reward of $1 million paid to Mr. David Kaczynski for information leading to the conviction of the Unabomber.

We introduced a similar bill late last session, which was passed by the Senate but, due to procedural and content changes, was not considered in the House before adjournment. We believe we have addressed the content concerns of the proposal and are reintroducing a more general bill to be considered through the regular legislative process.

As you may remember, in the fall of 1995 Mr. David Kaczynski provided invaluable assistance to the FBI. As a result of Mr. Kaczynski placing the health and safety of American citizens ahead of family loyalty, Federal authorities were able to apprehend his brother Theodore, the infamous Unabomber.

The Federal Government had offered a $1 million reward for information leading to the conviction of the Unabomber. Not wanting to profit personally from the tragedy caused by a deeply troubled member of their family, David Kaczynski and his wife pledged to distribute the net proceeds, after taxes and attorneys' fees, to his brother Theodore's victims and their families. However, because this income was considered taxable they were only able to direct $534,150 to a community based foundation to be used to benefit the victims of violent crime. If this reward had been tax-exempt, David and his wife would have had approximately $200,000 more to distribute.

Accordingly, we are reintroducing the bill today, which would permit the full reward to be tax-exempt and allow the amount, otherwise used to pay taxes, to ultimately benefit the victims and their families. We invite our colleagues to cosponsor this legislation and assist us in closing this chapter of the Unabomber saga and bring some sense of justice to the Unabomber's victims and their families.

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