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Senate

By Mr. TSONGAS (for himself, Mr. JACKSON, Mr. MAGNUSON, Mr. BRADLEY, Mr. JAVITS, Mr. NELSON, and Mr. GRAVEL):

S. 3092. A bill entitled the "National Hostel System Act of 1980"; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

NATIONAL YOUTH HOSTEL SYSTEM ACT OF 1980

● Mr. TSONGAS. Mr. President, today I am introducing the "National Hostel System Act of 1980," a bill to plan for the development of a national youth hostel system. I am pleased that Senators JACKSON, MAGNUSON, BRADLEY, JAVITS, NELSON, and GRAVEL have joined with me as sponsors of the bill. It is the intent of this legislation to establish a commission for the purpose of developing a national hostel system plan. The commission shall consider such factors as existing hostel facilities and their locations; an assessment of the demand for hostel facilities; the identification of locations conducive to hostel development such as national parks, historic and recreation sites; minimum standards for management; and an assessment of the applicability and feasibility of incorporating existing State and Federal employment programs such as the young adult conservation corps, the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act program and summer youth programs. The commission will also examine the role of the Federal Government in such a system.

Currently there are over 5,000 youth hostels located in 50 nations around the world, including the United States. The international youth hostel system promotes low-cost, energy efficient travel for people of all ages. Hostels provide low-cost, usually dormitory style accommodations for national and international travelers throughout the world. Because of their dormitory-like bedrooms and open lounges, hostels provide unique opportunities for travelers to share their experience with travelers from many nations. Recently President Carter praised American Youth Hostel, Inc. for "its dedicated and highly successful efforts in the field of low-cost youth travel accommodations * * * (and for its) outstanding work (which has) greatly advanced international understanding and goodwill and strengthened our efforts to maintain peace in the world."

While in the United States we have only 240 hostels, Japan has over 563 hostels, West Germany over 550, and Great Britain over 269. These nations have recognized the important economic and cultural values of youth hostels and thus have actively participated in planning and developing hostel systems within their respective countries. Great Britain pays 50 percent of construction costs for approved hostels and Japan pays up to 90 percent. The economic spin-offs derived from the availability of these low-cost accommodations should not be underestimated. The savings on the cost of lodging can be spent in other sectors of the economy, in local restaurants, markets or cultural attractions.

Low-cost tourist accommodations in Europe, combined with the inflated dollar and low airfares, made European travel more accessible to east coast residents than cross-country travel in the

United States. However, now that foreign currencies buy more in America, we must take advantage of the foreign tourist market available to us. We need to cultivate this market and one of the best means available is to provide a familiar youth hostel system.

Not only are low-cost accommodations important to encourage foreign travel in the United States: We can encourage greater use of our recreational, historic, educational, and cultural facilities by Americans if we have a well developed national youth hostel system. Camp Fire, Inc., a national nonprofit youth organization, has written endorsing this legislation because it—

Will enhance opportunities for youth to travel across this Nation by increasing the number of facilities that are affordable, where youth can build friendships and find safety when taking rest . . . (It) will result in learning experiences for young people in settings that encourage the study of nature and conservation of natural resources.

— It is the intention of this bill to promote the development of a national youth hostel system in order to encourage increased use of our existing national resources, our parks, and historic sites, while promoting recreation and energy efficient travel. Hiking and biking groups support the bill as well as conservation and preservation groups.

One of the very attractive aspects of the bill is that it encourages the use of existing structures at historic sites, structures designated as part of the National Register of Historic Places. This contributes to the cultural and educational value of hosting, furthers our goal of preserving architectural structures of historic and cultural value, and provides constructive use of these structures. The rehabilitation of these sites contributes to local revitalization efforts and is energy and resource efficient as well as labor intensive. One of the provisions of the bill directs the commission to evaluate the feasibility of using employment programs like Young Adult Conservation Corps and CETA to participate in the rehabilitation efforts. Skills learned in rehabilitating historic structures can prove valuable as our urban revitalization efforts expand. One need only look at Washington to see the market for workers skilled in housing rehabilitation.

Conservation, preservation and recreation groups, hiking, biking, airline, and railroad interests, national and international groups, young and old, all support the development of a national youth hostel system. Obviously there is a need for this program: Government financing of the development plan will provide the stimulus for private sector development and management of the Nation's hostels.

I am pleased to introduce this legislation today and appreciate the support of my cosponsors Senators JACKSON, MAGNUSON, BRADLEY, JAVITS, NELSON, and GRAVEL. Also I ask unanimous consent that three newspaper articles be included in the Record regarding hosting. I urge my colleagues to carefully consider this legislation and join with me in sponsoring the National Hostel System Act of 1980.

There being no objection, the articles were ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the New York Times, July 13, 1980]
CONGRESS MAY MODESTLY HELP MODEST TRAVEL
(By Jill Smolowe)

Long associated with backpacking youngsters hitchhiking across Europe, hostels may soon be gaining popular support, and Government aid, in the United States. Granted, hostlers must be willing to sleep in bunk beds, share bedrooms and bathrooms with as many as seven others and sometimes perform housekeeping chores, including sweeping floors. But at an average cost of \$3 to \$5 per night, the budget-minded nowadays may be willing to overlook inconvenience and even adhere to occasional prohibitions against liquor, cigarettes, mixing of the sexes and staying out after midnight.

The trouble with hostels in the United States, say enthusiasts fresh from their European adventures, is that they are too few and far between. West Germany, for example, boasts more than 550 facilities and children are introduced to hostels as part of their schooling. In London, four facilities provide 1,000 beds on any night, while many of the 269 hostels dotting the English and Welsh countryside are only a day's hike or bike trip from each other.

Vast distances separate America's 240 hostels, and this country is unique among Western nations in having no Government subsidies for them. Only about 20 percent are in cities, the areas most attractive to foreigners; New York City has none at all.

This could now change. In May, the House of Representatives passed legislation calling for a two-year national plan to develop model hostels. While not financing construction of new facilities, the bill does call for the Government to grant up to \$200,000 for each existing building that would be renovated for use as a hostel. This month, the Senate Subcommittee on Parks, Recreation and Renewable Resources received the amended House measure. If it meets the subcommittee's approval and that of the parent Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, the bill will come before the full Senate in August.

Members of American Youth Hostel, Inc., the sole hostel system in the United States, are hoping that their two years of planning and lobbying for Congressional action will pay off as these residences become a way-of-American-life. "And without creating a new ward of the state," says Toby Gearhart, assistant manager of the only hostel in Washington, D.C.

Mr. Gearhart said that some American facilities belong to and are operated by the American youth hostel organization, which, as a member of the International Youth Hostel Federation, links them with an international network of 5,000 hostels in 50 member nations on six continents. But the majority, he said, are owned and operated by private citizens, who receive occasional financial assists from A.Y.H. "And most of these," he said, "are profitable enough to support themselves."

Thus passage of the legislation and enactment of subsidies, Mr. Gearhart said, would mean a net increase of units in a fairly self-sufficient system. "And more hostels in the United States would promote travel," said Tom Newman, executive director of the American hostel organization. "If you get people out to travel, even if they take low cost accommodations," he added, "they are still going to spend a lot of money in the cities that they visit."

Mr. Newman said that the rising costs of fuel and transportation and the shrinking purses people can spend on leisure activities are making hostels an increasingly appealing option for Americans of all ages. School groups, families and individuals are discovering that they need not pay an average of \$35 to \$40 a night for a hotel room when they can stay in a hostel for less than \$6.

"People who are traveling on a shoestring budget come to cities without hostels and

are floored by the prices," said Ralph Lusich, who directs the American Youth Hostel facilities in New York State. Contending that such experiences discourage tourism, he noted that "European governments are very interested in establishing hostels not only to encourage their own young to travel but as a spin-off. They know that a foreigner who travels to their country at 18 on a low budget will return when he's 25 or 30 years old traveling first class."

Though documentation is hard to find, this notion is shared by people expert in the travel and tourist business. Officials at the United States Travel Service, in the Department of Commerce, and the United States Travel Data Center in Washington, D.C., for example, agree that traveling inexpensively at an early age encourages people to continue traveling throughout their lives.

Mr. Gearhart suggested that a national hostel system, could also encourage a certain American boosterism. "Even though hostels are international, they are in some ways very nationalistic," he said. "In Uruguay and Bolivia, for example, they are a source of national honor, like a famous soccer team."

As in those countries, the new hostels in the United States would be intended for use by both native and foreign travelers. Existing American hostels already enjoy diverse clientele. In Washington, about 50 percent of the guests are foreigners. In Boulder, Colo., Americans constitute about 75 percent of those spending the night.

And the possibility for significant increases in visitors and natives hosting their way across the United States is high. More than three million people, from toddlers to retirees, already are members of the International Youth Hostel Federation. The annual fee for a membership card—\$7 to \$14 depending on the applicant's age—allows them to use any facility in any part of the world at special rates. (Non-members can stay at the hostels, though they pay slightly more.)

Many people, particularly students, find the physical layout of the buildings, with their common meeting rooms, convivial. The curfews, uncommon in the United States, and the drinking and smoking prohibitions do not faze most early-to-bed, early-to-rise types and the opportunity for sharing information and perhaps picking up road companions is a boon.

"The beauty is sitting in a recreation room and hearing four languages spoken," Mr. Newman said. "It's the best of what the United Nations is supposed to have been: people discovering their own and other lands through the eyes of a foreigner."

[From the Christian Science Monitor, Aug. 19, 1980]

AMERICAN HOSTELS: SIMPLE, FRIENDLY, INEXPENSIVE LODGING

(By Denise Rea)

In the front yard the group may be playing duck-duck-goose; in the back, sitting around a bonfire exchanging stories; and before the day ends, some of these strangers may become friends.

These travelers are hostellers exploring the American countryside, discovering places others only dream about. They come in all ages and backgrounds, families or singles, from every part of the world.

They may be in the Rockies for the weekend, bicycling across the U.S., or walking the Florida beaches. But all have one thing in common—the desire to get out and see what's over the next hill.

At night they converge on hostels—safe, clean places to spend the night without spending a fortune. Overnight fees average \$3.50 per person, slightly more during the winter due to heating costs. Hostellers bring their own food and cook their own meals.

On the outside, these American hostels may be farmhouses, mansions, barns, or private homes; on the inside they are converted into dormitory-style sleeping accommodations with kitchen facilities and a common living-room.

Simplicity is the rule. There are no servants, so hostellers share in domestic duties, washing dishes and sweeping floors. They are supervised by resident houseparents who are volunteers or hired at small salaries.

Hostels, open to all who carry a valid American Youth Hostel membership pass, are usually closed during the day and have some type of curfew varying from 10 p.m. to 1 a.m. Maximum stay is usually three nights. Many of them are open year round; most encourage reservations.

In the US, hosteling means traveling under your own steam—biking, hiking, canoeing, skiing, or by horseback—but since many hostels are located in isolated areas, public transportation or private cars can be used as long as travelers plan to engage in outdoor activities during their stay at a hostel.

"Hostels bring people together," explains Art Olson, a co-houseparent with his wife Lucy, in Durango, Colo. "It's like organizing a family. Even the chores—especially dishwashing—become a good time."

Hostellers usually arrive in Durango by bus, but participate in outdoor activities during their stay, visiting prehistoric cliff dwellings at Mesa Verde National Park, the melodrama Abbey Theater, or they go snow-skiing, hiking, rafting, or fishing. Discount coupons are available through the hostel for many activities.

The Durango hostel has already had visitors from 36 countries and 45 states so far this year. Art Olson says it's like "bringing the world to us."

Star of the Sea Hostel in Nantucket, Mass., an island off Cape Cod, was originally a life-saving station built in 1883. It is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Nantucket houseparents Becky Buck-Leaman and Jeff Leaman first became enthused about hostelling during their travels in Europe and were tour leaders for many AYH-sponsored trips in the United States.

"We enjoy interacting with people who share our interest in the out-of-doors," says Jeff Leaman. "I can't think of another way I'd rather spend my time." Star of the Sea, with accommodations for 70, is booked for 90 percent of the summer, an indication of the way hostelling in the US is skyrocketing.

At this hostel, rise and shine is 7 a.m., allowing two hours for wakeup and breakfast. From 9 to 9:30 a.m., everyone does chores and then hits the road.

Hostellers start arriving for the night at 5 p.m. and spend a few minutes registering and settling in. The rest of the evening may be spent at the beach, playing volleyball or horseshoes, but mostly just getting to know everyone. Lights are out by 10:30 p.m.

Hostels can be owned privately or by AYH councils and other groups such as the YMCA and church and outdoor organizations.

In Carnation, Wash., Darcy and Don Newman have opened their private home to hostellers.

"It doesn't tie us down," says Darcy Newman. "It's really a neighborhood hostel. If we're booked up or out when a hosteller arrives, they can just go next door."

Most Carnation hostellers arrive by car or bus. The area is a great bike riding, swimming, and hiking area, with four ski resorts only 30 minutes away.

"We have had many hostellers from Australia and Germany," says Mrs. Newman. "House parenting has been great. It's like traveling without going anywhere."

The first US hostel was opened in 1934 by two American schoolteachers, Isabel and Monroe Smith, in Northfield, Mass. Today, there are 250 hostels in 40 states and the District of Columbia and more than 82,000 AYH members.

AYH is part of the worldwide International Youth Hostel Federation. Memberships cost \$7 to \$14 annually, depending on age. Special discount rates are available for families and nonprofit organizations. Introductory cards for \$1 are available for first-time visitors who want to try the experience before joining.

Members receive the "American Youth Hostel Guide" listing all US hostel locations, prices, maps, and suggestions for tours including the popular "chains" in California, Colorado, and the New England states where many hostels are clustered together.

AYH hopes to add coastal chains on the Atlantic, Pacific, and Gulf shores; the area of western Montana between Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks; and the Great Lakes area.

Because the US is so vast, youth hostels have not yet developed in all areas of the country. "We need a hostel in Concord or Manchester, N.H., to fill in a chain between Boston and Montreal," explains Ron Gallagher, office manager for the Greater Boston AYH Council.

He emphasizes that hostels try to promote international goodwill. "It's one of the biggest reasons I'm involved with AYH. People on international travels get to know and make friends with people in other countries, so we're less likely to go to war with each other."

For information contact: American Youth Hostels, Inc., Delaplane, Va. 22025.

[From the Los Angeles Times, June/July 1980]

HOSTELS CUT ACROSS CULTURAL EXCHANGE BARRIERS

(By George Geyer)

WASHINGTON.—I was bad that night, I admit it. With Mary McDermott, the other half of the friendship that reinforced our distinct dereliction, I want to see The Tarantella Champion of All Sicily dance in a little Sicilian tavern. And it was well worth it.

What was not worth it that warm and innocent Sicilian night was being locked out—and eventually thrown out—of the Youth Hostel at Taormina. Even though the other students gamely jimmied the lock at 2 a.m. to sneak us back in, we were found out and, in the morning, Mary and I were solemnly told that, having broken the 11 p.m. curfew, we must go.

Sadly we moved on, waving farewells to those good friends who would have covered us. Our tails were between our legs but we were not, in truth, sorry—after all, how many nights can you see The Tarantella Champion of All Sicily dance only for you?

It would be easy this time of year to reminisce over and over, now that another summer is upon us with its sticky nights, which so readily germinate memories in ways that cool nights do not.

There was a Youth Hostel grapevine all over Europe in those days, and you soon heard about the prizes: Florence's hostel was an old palace complete with bar and barman; Stockholm's was a graceful white sailing ship, and each bed had its own reading light; Carcassonne, the magnificent old walled city in southern France, had its hostel in an old church, where we ended up sleeping in the choir loft.

And it all cost only 20 cents a night! It was enough to make of you forever a happy and very continental cheapskate, and there have been those who have malevolently suggested that this is indeed what came about.

But I am not only, now, reminiscing. It is a time of quintessentially bad news in the world, and yet there are all sorts of good things happening underneath. One of them is the fact that, finally, a comprehensive American Youth Hostel system is getting closer to reality.

The bill to develop a national system of hostels here passed the U.S. House of Representatives on May 19 and has been sent to the Senate for what we hope will be prompt action. Because, although there already are some 240 Youth Hostels, Inc., this is the first time the country itself will create a real structure. There are even plans to convert some historic trust properties into living monuments by making them into hostels.

But—and I can testify from my own experience roaming all over Europe those 20 years ago—youth hostelling is much, much more than just having inexpensive places to lodge with other genial cheapskates.

It is much more than a movement that allows you to "see the world." It is a kind of other wave length, which permits people, living by their own choice at a minimal cost and in a special way, to cut across the barriers that more formal ways of living place in the way of real cultural exchange.

And this brings to mind a real worry of mine—that, in the harsh exigencies of all the difficult and cruel things that have been happening in the world recently, we are forgetting the utterly crucial ingredient of culture. Yet there has never been a time when we more truly need (even for our own sanity) to know and appreciate other cultures and to reinforce our own.

There are clearly negative ways to react to the events of the world today: with fear, with withdrawal, with more exchanges of brutality. And there are positive ways: by reinforcing the strong points of cultures, by more exchange, by precisely programs like the Youth Hostel one, which will encourage Americans and visitors even to meet problems of energy and inflation in new and creative ways.

And unless the world and mind of the Youth Hostellers have changed, I remain confident that if there is a Tarantella dancer out there, they will find him.