PERMISSION FOR CERTAIN COMMITTEES TO SIT TOMORROW, FRIDAY, MARCH 3, 1995, DURING 5-MINUTE RULE

Mr. BONILLA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the following committees and their subcommittees be permitted to sit tomorrow while the House is meeting in the Committee of the Whole House under the five-minute rule: the Committee on Commerce, the Committee on Economic and Educational Opportunities, the Committee on the Judiciary, and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

It is my understanding that the minority has been consulted and that there is no objection to these requests.

Mr. WISE. Mr. Speaker, reserving the right to object, the minority simply wants to say it has been consulted in all these cases and does agree.

Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my reservation of objection.

Mr. SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 1995, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members are recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. WELDON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. WELDON of Florida addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York [Mr. OWENS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. OWENS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York [Mr. TOWNS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. TOWNS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Colorado [Mr. HEFLEY] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. HEFLEY addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Mr. FILNER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. FILNER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. SMITH] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. SMITH of Michigan addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

FEDERAL FOOD ASSISTANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from North Carolina [Mrs. CLAYTON] is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, a compelling case can be made against the proposal to convert Federal nutrition programs into block grants.

That case will be made tonight.

Over the next 2 hours, the American public will hear from many of our colleagues about the dangers of certain provisions of H.R. 4, the Personal Responsibility Act.

That is the bill that contains provisions to slash school lunches and breakfasts.

That bill will remove thousands of women, infants and children from the WIC Program. National nutrition standards will be eliminated by the bill. And States will be able to transfer as much as 24 percent of nutrition funds for non-nutrition uses.

But, the impact of this proposed bill goes even deeper.

Retail food sales will decline by $10 billion, farm income will be reduced by as much as $4 billion and unemployment will increase by as many as 138,000.

The security of America's economy is at stake.

From grocery stores, large and small, to the farmer and food service worker—everyone will suffer. Most States will lose money.

But, the case becomes even more compelling when viewed in a broader context.

The House Appropriations Committee is pushing a recession package that, when combined with the proposed cuts in the nutrition programs, will squeeze those most in need in ways we have not seen in America, since the Great Depression of the 1930's.

Nearly $2 billion will be cut from education programs, including money for drug free schools and educational support for the disadvantaged.

Also $3 billion will be cut from programs that move teenagers from school to work, including complete elimination of the Summer Jobs Program.

Our seniors and veterans do not escape this blind axe

Billions will be cut in federally assisted senior citizen housing. The 2 million needy senior citizens who benefit from the Fuel Assistance Program may go cold. That program will be completely eliminated.

That committee's bill cuts $50 million in funds for veterans' medical equipment and facilities.

Billions of the money saved by these cuts will go to the top 3 percent wage earners in the United States in the form of a 50 percent cut in the capital gains tax.

They want capital gains cuts. We want an increase in the minimum wage. They want block grants. We want healthy Americans.

They want a full plate for those with money. We want to restore Federal food assistance programs. And, we will. The nutrition of our citizens should not be left to chance.

Mr. Speaker, all of the nutrition programs are important.

I would like to highlight one of them to demonstrate the poor judgment of those pushing passage of H.R. 4.

That is the WIC Program. WIC works.

It is a program that services low income and at risk women, infants, and children.

Pregnant women, infants 12 months and younger, and children from 1 to 5 years old, are the beneficiaries of the WIC Program.

For every dollar this Nation spends on WIC prenatal care, we save up to $4.21.

The budget cutting efforts we are experiencing are aimed at reducing the deficit.

The deficit is being driven by rising health care costs.

When we put money into WIC, we save money in Medicaid. The equation is simple.

Those who have a genuine interest in deficit reduction can help achieve that goal by investing in WIC.

The WIC Program embraces the unborn; provides nurturing and care; is devoted to maternal health; helps insure life at birth; and promotes the growth and development of millions of our children.

And, it saves us money.

WIC works. Let's keep it working.

The Committee on Economic and Educational Opportunities has proposed radical changes in the school lunch and WIC programs.

If these changes stand, 275,000 women, infants, and children will be removed from the WIC Program. Nutritious meals served in 185,000 family day care centers will be eliminated. School food programs will be reduced by $309 million.

In contrast, the Agriculture Committee has proposed keeping the Food Stamp Program as an entitlement. The committee is to be commended.

It seems inconsistent, however, to retain food stamps as an entitlement, a program that has had some problems with fraud and abuse, while block granting the WIC and school lunch programs.

Mr. Speaker, last year, we spent just $26 per American taxpayer for the AFDC Program.

Child nutrition programs represented just one-half of 1 percent of total Federal outlays in 1994. The average food stamp benefits is 75 cents per person, per meal. Seventy-five cents. Children aren't driving our deficit.

Senior citizens are not the cause of our economic woes. Programs for the poor do not represent pork.

That is why I maintain that H.R. 4, the Personal Responsibility Act of 1995, is irresponsible.

Mr. Speaker, this Nation is strong, not just because of its military might or its technology.

This Nation is strong because of its compassion.

We care about those among us who are weak—the young, the old, the poor, the frail, the disabled. If our citizens are weak, we are weak.

I hope the American people will pay close attention to the statements by our colleagues this evening.

Change for the sake of improvement is good. Change for the sake of change is not. Something different does not necessarily create something better. Most of us support welfare reform because the current system does not serve us well.

However, the nutrition programs do not need the kind of sweeping change as proposed by the proponents of H.R. 4.

A compelling case against that proposal can and will be made tonight.

And, at the end of the presentations, I ask all to judge for themselves who will be helped and who will be hurt by the proposal to block grant our nutrition programs?

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CALL FOR A BALANCED BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MCHUGH). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan, (Mr. SMITH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, Thomas Jefferson, in a letter to Elbridge Gerry in 1799, wrote:

> I am for a government rigorously frugal and simple, applying all the possible savings of the public revenue to the discharge of the national debt; and not for a multiplication of officer and salaries merely to make partisans, and for increasing by every device, the public debt, on the principle of its being a public blessing.

I agree with Mr. Jefferson wholeheartedly, and I suspect that most other Americans do as well. Today, the Federal debt is in excess of $4.7 trillion and growing at a rate of $200 billion to $300 billion per year. As the CATO institute has pointed out, this is both an economic and a moral problem. The economic problem is that deficit financing is the ultimate form of hidden taxation. Federal borrowing injects a huge prospending bias into the budget process by allowing politicians to hand out a dollar of Government spending to voters, while only imposing 80 cents of taxes. Nobel Laureate James Buchanan in a 1977 book with his colleague Richard Wagner, alerted us to this problem. In their book Democracy in Deficit, Buchanan and Wagner argued strongly for a balanced budget amendment in order to contain the spending bias of a Government able to increase its expansion into the economy without the political restraints of raising taxes.

Unbridled Federal spending will eventually lead to what economists call monetizing of the debt, which in plain English means that the Government pays for its debt by increasing the money supply. That cheats the lenders and causes inflation. This hidden tax, which Adam Smith called the worst form of taxation, strikes most heavily on those who save. As every senior citizen knows, their security can be wiped out in short order by even moderate inflation. At 8 percent inflation, the Government can effectively take away half of the money one has saved over a lifetime of work in about 9 years.

The moral argument for a balanced budget is that federal borrowing is taxation without representation. Recall the words of the Declaration of Independence which refers to the repeated injuries and usurpations of King George because he imposed taxes on us without our consent. Can't our children make this same claim against a Congress that saddles them with interest payments that are already at $339 billion annually? None of our children and grandchildren currently have a say in the political process that is now putting their future at risk.

On January 26, the House of Representatives passed a balanced budget amendment. Today, it was narrowly defeated in the Senate. This amendment would have imposed much-needed fiscal discipline on Congress and it would have taken away our ability to spend recklessly while sending the bills to our children and grandchildren.

Without this amendment, it will be much more difficult to balance the budget, but I for one am willing to make the hard choices. I call on my colleagues to stop deficit spending, and I call on all citizens to commit themselves to do their part, to sacrifice some of the many things they get from government, so we can balance the budget, look our kids in the eye, and tell them that we will no longer force them to pay future taxes to enhance our current standard of living. As a nation of people who look to the future, and care about our children as much as we care about ourselves, we can make the commitment to balance the budget, and keep that commitment.

IN SUPPORT OF FEDERAL NUTRITION PROGRAMS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BONIOR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, let me tell you a story about why the Federal nutrition programs are so important.

Let me tell you about a school in my county.

Not long ago I met with some teachers from a grade school.

They told me that before we instituted the Federal breakfast program that kids came to school late, if they came at all, they were disruptive in class, their attention spans were bad, and they weren't learning.

But then we instituted the Federal breakfast program.

Kids actually showed up a half an hour early and lined up just to get into the school for the breakfast.

As a result, the kids settled down, their learning ability went up, and test scores went up.

It was a tremendous success.

That story is repeated every single day in schools all over America. Every time a kid comes to school hungry, Every time a kid needs to be fed, no matter what his background, whether his parents are poor or middle class. This program makes sure they get a good, nutritious meal.

I can't understand why anybody would want to put that at risk.

If we've learned anything the past 50 years, it is simply this: a third grader can't learn if his stomach speaks louder than the teacher leading class. It's just that simple.

But the changes made by Gingrich Republicans last week in committee will put this program at serious risk.

As a result, I'm afraid we're going to see a diminished quality of learning in our school systems.

Let's be clear what the Republicans voted to do last week.

They voted to cut the school lunch and school breakfast program, to put all that money into Federal block grants, and send them to the States.

And here's what that means. As the school lunch program now works, any hungry child who needs a breakfast or lunch gets one.

If tough times come along and more children need to be fed—then they get the food they need.

Since 1946, the program has operated predictably and smoothly—and worked very well. But by putting this money into block grants, and turning complete control over to the States, all that changes.

Under this formula, each State gets a limited amount of money. When the money runs out, kids stop getting fed.

If tough times hit, under the new formula, kids will get turned away.

To make matters worse, by putting this money into block grants, you put them in direct competition with other programs.

And we all know what's going to happen.

Kids don't have a constituency on Capitol Hill. They don't have as many lobbyists working for their funding. We