EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1996

SPEECH OF

HON. VIC FAZIO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 22, 1995

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1854) making appropriations for the legislative branch for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1996, and for other purposes:

Mr. FAZIO. Mr. Chairman, this is a particularly ill-considered amendment offered today by the gentleman from Wisconsin, [Mr. KLUG], and I oppose it strongly. It gives little thought to the reductions to the Government Printing Office already contained in the bill or the significant reductions to GPO over many years due to its modernization efforts. Let me describe those efforts for my colleagues.

In 1975, GPO had 8,500 full-time equivalents, or FTE's. The committee-mandated level of 3,900 FTE's means GPO has reduced its staff by over 50 percent since that time.

In just the past 2 years—since February 1993—total GPO employment has fallen by 13 percent. FTE's have been reduced from 4,893 to 4,250, a reduction of 646 positions at a cost savings of $32 million. During those 2 years and based on the retirement incentive program, which was authorized by law, 357 positions, primarily managers and supervisors, were eliminated representing about 7 percent of GPO's work force.

GPO's authorized level has been reduced in this bill from 4,293 FTE's to 3,900 FTE's. In addition, GPO has typically employed fewer FTE's than authorized by law. For example, in fiscal year 1994, GPO utilized 4,364 FTE's compared with an authorized level of 4,493. In the current fiscal year, 1995, GPO is utilizing 4,250 FTE's compared with an authorized level of 4,293, and their objective is to reduce FTE's further in this fiscal year—to 4,200.

Clearly, the trend over many years has been to reduce employees at GPO, to take advantage of modern equipment, to bring management-to-employee ratios into equality with those throughout the Government, and to use even fewer FTE's than authorized by law.

This amendment offers absolutely no guidance as to where a 350-employee reduction would come from. GPO's core printing and binding function—which utilizes the vast majority of FTE's—could be affected adversely.

Perhaps more important, an amendment of this nature sends a terrible message to an important agency and to the employees who would be affected. It sends the message that no matter what strides GPO makes in downsizing, we will never consider it enough. No matter what type of planning they start to undertake for cost-effective long-term downsizing, we will always throw another curve at them.

There are $155 million of cuts in this bill, and GPO has already been dealt its fair share of cuts as we seek to reduce the legislative branch. Let's leave GPO alone. I urge a ''no'' vote on the Klug amendment.

IN HONOR OF DR. WILLIAM STEUART McBIRNIE

HON. CARLOS J. MOORHEAD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 28, 1995

Mr. MOORHEAD. Mr. Speaker, I rise with sadness today upon learning of the passing of Dr. William Steuart McBirnie. Dr. McBirnie established the United Community Church of Glendale in the winter of 1960 and served for more than 20 years as senior pastor. Dr. McBirnie was a well versed man who will be missed. He was a humanitarian who founded the World Emergency Relief, a nonprofit organization providing relief aid to the needy and suffering throughout the free world. Holding seven doctoral degrees, Dr. McBirnie was a knowledgeable man. As a professor of Homiletics, Church Architecture and Middle Eastern Studies, he was eager to share his wisdom. He is a man who was in touch with society. Not only was he author of over 1,200 books and other publications, Dr. McBirnie acted as a news analyst for ''The Voice of Americanism'' which aired over a nationwide radio network. He offered forthright and thought provoking commentaries to millions of listeners daily.

A man respected by many, he was the recipient of numerous honors. Dr. McBirnie has been knighted twice and received the George Washington gold medal of honor from the Freedom Foundation, Valley Forge, PA.

Dr. William Steuart McBirnie was a personal friend of mine who will be missed. Yet it is comforting to know that he has entered into the rest which he so richly deserves.

HEALTH COST FIGHTER MOVING ON

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 28, 1995

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, at the close of this month, Tom Elkin will be stepping down from his position as assistant executive officer for health benefits for the California Public Employees' Retirement System. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Tom for the great work he has done for CalPERS and the people of California.

Tom's energy, knowledge, and enthusiasm are key reasons why the CalPERS board entrusted him to guide the system's health program. He has been instrumental in CalPERS' success in holding down health insurance costs for the nearly 1 million people who receive health benefits through CalPERS and actually obtaining cost reductions in the last 2 years through hard bargaining with providers. Under his management, the CalPERS health program has maintained quality and choice for its participants while keeping providers honest and focused on those who come to them for care.

During the 103d Congress, CalPERS was used as a paradigm by many players in the health reform debate who sought to reproduce the system's savvy use of its market power to negotiate with health care providers. Tom Elkin's skill and diligence created this enviable record of quality and cost containment which has made CalPERS a model for health care management for the 21st century.

California will miss the service of this distinguished public servant, who is moving on to new challenges. I wish Tom the best for the future.

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1996

SPEECH OF

HON. VIC FAZIO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 22, 1995

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1854) making appropriations for the legislative branch for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1996, and for other purposes:

Mr. FAZIO. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the Christensen amendment. During the 13 years that I've managed the legislative appropriations bill, I can't count the number of times we have dealt with an amendment to cut elevator operators.

As a newcomer to our body, the gentleman from Nebraska, Mr. Christensen, lacks the perspective on this issue that many of his more senior colleagues enjoy. The fact is, over the last dozen years or so, the House has cut elevator operators from a level of 150 to just 22 today. Twelve of these operators work in the Capitol, 10 work in House buildings. The average salary of these full-time employees is below $20,000.

Over the years, the Architect regularly has requested funds to modernize elevators. Because the committee has worked to make these funds available, and because this modernization has been carried out in many areas, we have been able to reduce the number of elevator operators dramatically. The fact is, we employ a minimum number now, and we use them where Member traffic and traffic from our visitors is heaviest, essentially only where it is absolutely necessary to expedite Members getting to votes.

I also think the gentleman forgets that these loyal employees are some of the best goodwill ambassadors in the House, responding tirelessly to thousand of questions from our visiting constituents each year and helping our visitors through the Capitol's bewildering and sprawling complex.

The events of yesterday dramatically point out the difference that a few seconds can make in whether Members will get to the Chamber successfully to represent their constituents on the important bills and amendments we vote on daily. As the Republican leadership insists on a 17-minute time frame for votes in order to expedite the business of the House, punctuality will remain very important.

I strongly oppose the gentleman's amendment, and I urge my colleagues to let their common sense overcome this crude attempt to engage in the politics of sound-bites and political expediency.

CONGRESSIONAL REFORM

HON. LEE H. HAMILTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 28, 1995

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Speaker, I would like to insert my Washington Report for Wednesday, June 28, 1995 into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD:

REFORMING CONGRESS

Last week the House passed its version of the 1996 funding bill for Congress. Overall funding for the House would be cut 8% from the 1995 level. Congress must take the lead in fiscal discipline. This bill is a step in the right direction.

The bill also includes several worthwhile reforms of the operations of Congress. It cuts funding for committee staff, cuts Members' mail allowances, and eliminates a congressional committee. It also cuts back congressional support agencies. The Office of Technology Assessment, the Government Printing Office, and the General Accounting Office all would be downsized.

These are all worthwhile reforms, and they reflect Members' continuing efforts to streamline Congress and improve its operations. In my view, three broader changes could make the reform process better.

ALLOWING MORE AMENDMENTS

The floor amendment process needs to be more open. The House leadership prohibited several reform amendments to the congressional funding bill from being considered on the floor. Members wanted to offer amendments, for example, to eliminate additional committees and ban gifts from lobbyists. Of the 33 amendments that Members wanted to offer on the floor, only 11 were allowed. Most of the denied amendments called for additional reforms or deeper spending cuts.

Last session Members in the minority objected, with some justification, that many of their amendments were not allowed to be offered, and they promised that if they were ever in the majority the amendment process would be much more open. Yet the new leadership has made only modest progress toward more openness. The amendment process tends to be open on minor bills and restrained on controversial matters. Certainly on some difficult bills and amendment process cannot be totally open. But on such bills the leadership has to identify the major policy issues and allow a thorough and thoughtful consideration of them. We still have a long way to go to reach the goal of allowing Members to vote on the major reform issues of the day.

GREATER BIPARTISANSHIP

Another concern is the increasingly partisan nature of congressional reform. A partisan task force has been set up by the House leadership to make recommendations on additional reforms, particularly further changes in committee jurisdictions.

Committee reform is an appropriate topic for review, but I am disappointed that the leadership has chosen not to make it a bipartisan task force. Last Congress we set up the Joint Committee on the Organization of Congress in a bipartisan way, with an equal number of Members from both parties. Historically that has been the best way to achieve long-lasting institutional reform.

REGULARIZING REFORM

I also believe that we need to regularize the congressional reform process, taking up a major reform package each Congress.

One of my main conclusions from my work last Congress on the Joint Committee on the Organization of Congress is that the institution is better served if congressional reform is treated more as an ongoing, continual process rather than something taken up in an omnibus way every few decades.

Congress has set up three major bipartisan, House-Senate reform efforts in recent times—the 1945, 1965, and 1993 Joint Committees on the Organization of Congress. All three committees were given extremely broad mandates—to look at virtually all aspects of Congress in order to improve efficiency and effectiveness. The Joint Committee in the last Congress took up everything from committee jurisdiction changes and the congressional budget process to ethics reform, House-Senate relations, and congressional compliance with the laws we pass for everyone else. We conducted scores of hearings, heard from hundreds of witnesses, looked over thousands of pages of testimony, considered hundreds of reform ideas, and issued reports totalling several thousand pages.

In my view, it would be far preferable to have the House take up a major congressional reform resolution each Congress. That would make the task much more manageable, since Members would be able to focus attention on the key issues of the day rather than the entire range of procedural and organizational matters carried over from previous Congresses. It would allow us to continually update the institutions of Congress in a rapidly changing world. Letting systematic institutional reform slide for several years only allows problems to fester and heightens partisan tensions.

I recently introduced a resolution requiring the Rules Committee to take up the issue of a congressional reform resolution each Congress. If the Committee decides against sending such a reform resolution to the House floor for consideration, they would have to explain—as part of a required end-of-Congress report—why they thought congressional reform was not needed.

Interest in congressional reform tends to ebb and flow according to the changing interests of the voters and the main House players in reform, the shifting national agenda, and the varying amounts of media coverage given to the operation of Congress. I believe we need to regularize the process so that whoever is in charge of reform in the future will be looking seriously at scheduling and debating a congressional reform resolution each Congress.

This is not a new idea. The Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970 stated the need for a congressional panel to ''make a continuing study of the organization and operation of the Congress''. Moreover, the 1974 bipartisan House Select Committee on Committees stated that ''a key aspect of any viable reorganization is provision for continuing evaluation of its effectiveness, and for periodic adjustments in the institution as new situations arise''. It is time to finally follow through on these recommendations and regularize the congressional reform process.

We have been making progress on reforming Congress. But pursuing reform in a more bipartisan, open, and regular way will make our efforts more productive.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE ULSTER PROJECT

HON. MARTIN FROST

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 28, 1995

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge the Ulster project. For the second consecutive year, youths from Northern Ireland have come to Arlington, TX, to see and learn how individuals from different backgrounds can live together in peace.

The Ulster project is comprised of teenagers from Northern Ireland who travel to the United States for 1 month. Teenagers of both Protestant and Catholic faiths participate. Each Irish youth is placed in an Arlington family that shares similar interests. The goal of the program is to demonstrate to the Irish teenagers that people from different faiths and backgrounds can peacefully coexist. The ultimate goal is that they take the experiences that they have learned back home with them to Ireland.

Living in Arlington, TX, this summer are the following teenagers, listed with their hometown: Judith A. Conliffe, Belfast; David Laughlin, Newtonabbey; Andrew McCorriston, Belfast; Louise Morris, Belfast; Cherith McFarland, Newtonabbey; Peter Kelly, Bangor; Ashleigh Cochrane, Newtonabbey; Janine Swail, Belfast; Donna Smyth, Newtonabbey; Gareth Price, Bangor; Fiannuala Hanna, Belfast; Gavin Kyle, Glengormley; Stuart Hall, Belfast; Adrian Kidd, Newtonabbey; Neil McCabe, Belfast; Catherine Davidson, Belfast. Richard Hazley of Bangor and Regina Bradley of Belfast will be accompanying the teenagers as counselors.

Again, I commend this project as a genuine effort to help a country that has for too long been torn apart by war. Progress has been made in Ulster to bring about a peaceful solution. This program and ones like it can only serve as a shining example of what can happen if people work with one another to achieve mutual respect and understanding.

RECOGNITION OF DR. GREG ROTH

HON. CARLOS J. MOORHEAD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 28, 1995

Mr. MOORHEAD. Mr. Speaker, selflessness is a cherished commodity in the era in which we live.

I rise today to recognize Dr. Greg Roth, executive pastor of my home church, Glendale (CA) Presbyterian. Dr. Roth is an individual who exemplifies this selflessness through his love and concern for others. We honor a man who through years of dedicated service to his church and his community, has earned a reputation for leadership, compassion, and generosity.

He, like others, envisions things which are for the betterment of our society. Yet, what