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Senate

The Senate met at 9 a.m., and was called to order by the President pro tempore [Mr. THURMOND].

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie, offered the following prayer:

Lord God, You are the light of truth for those who know You, the security of those who love You, the strength of those who trust You, the patience of those who wait on You, and the courage of those who serve You. Fill this Senate Chamber with Your presence. May all that we say and do here today be said and done with an acute awareness of our accountability to You. Help us to ask, "What would the Lord do?" and then, "Lord, what do You want us to do?" In our present impasse over the Federal budget, give us long fuses to our tempers and a long view for our vision of the future of America. We invite You not only to dwell in this place but in our minds so that we can think Your thoughts and discover Your solutions. In the name of our Lord. Amen.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The able Senator from Oregon is recognized.

Mr. HATFIELD. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. HATFIELD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that further proceedings under the quorum call be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KYL). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. HATFIELD. Mr. President, the Senate has before it what?

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

FURTHER CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 1996

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will now consider House Joint Resolution 122, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (H.J. Res. 122) making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 1996, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the immediate consideration of the joint resolution?

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the joint resolution.

Mr. HATFIELD. Mr. President, the Senate now has under consideration House Joint Resolution 122, making further continuing appropriations for fiscal year 1996. The resolution provides authority to obligate funds for programs and activities normally funded in the nine regular appropriations bills not yet signed into law. The rate of operations is to be the lowest of the current rate, the rate proposed by the Senate or the rate proposed by the House. Programs and activities terminated or significantly reduced under that formulation may be maintained at a rate not to exceed 60 percent of the current rate. And the rate of operations may be adjusted further to avoid reductions in force.

The expiration date of this continuing resolution is December 5, 1995. This resolution does not include the provision relative to Medicare part B premiums that was in the measure vetoed by the President on Monday. Let me emphasize, that has been removed. That was the great focus of debate and discussion on that first continuing resolution. That is gone.

Instead, there is included the following provision which I will read in its entirety.

Section 301 of this continuing resolution:

(a) The President and the Congress shall enact legislation in the 104th Congress to achieve a unified balanced budget not later than the fiscal year 2002 as scored by the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office.

(b) The unified balanced budget in subsection (a) shall be based on the most current economic and technical assumptions of the Congressional Budget Office.

That is it. Nothing more. Simple, straightforward. Mr. President, I want to say, in adopting this resolution, we are simply recommending and recommending ourselves to a balanced budget. That is a commitment I believe we all share.

There is nothing in this resolution, Mr. President, that says we will achieve balance with tax increases or with tax cuts. There is nothing here that says whether defense spending will rise or fall. There is no mention of Medicare or COLA's or highways or education or the environment. We will have our arguments about all of those things, but we ought to be able to agree that we will balance the budget. That is all we are committing ourselves to.

And in stipulating that our efforts should be measured by the Congressional Budget Office, we are only restating what we are already required to do and what the President of the United States, Mr. Clinton himself, asked us to do in his address to a joint session of Congress some time ago. We cannot bring any proposal to this floor that has not been scored by the Congressional Budget Office. The President has agreed to that.

As one of those who voted against the constitutional amendment requiring a balanced budget, I argued that we did not need to encumber the Constitution when we could achieve balance within legislation. Members on the other side of the aisle argued the same. I still hold that position, and I ask my

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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