

CONGRESS WILL PROTECT  
AMERICA'S VETERANS

Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, we paused last week, as we do each November 11th, to honor American veterans who have given so much to their country for the cause of freedom. As a nation, we stop on Veterans Day to express our gratitude for their service and their sacrifice. And it is worth questioning whether the freedom which we embrace in America would have spread across the world had those sacrifices not been made.

Because of their profound love for their country, veterans understand better than many people how important it is that we face the problems plaguing this Nation. "Congress is doing exactly what I want it to do, in spite of some who oppose the progress we are making," wrote a disabled veteran from Shoreview, MN, who urged me to continue pressing for a balanced budget.

So in much the same way Americans once united during wartime, we are now united in peace, working together as a nation to create a Government strong enough to meet the needs of its veterans today, while it safeguards the freedom our veterans ensured for us.

That is why I find it so appalling that veterans would be singled out by the President and his administration to be the latest political pawns in their budget maneuverings.

Mr. President, I have received a copy of a press release issued by the Department of Veterans Affairs just 2 days ago, and I am utterly disgusted by the scare tactics it employs and the blatant misrepresentations it contains.

"Nearly 3.6 million veterans, widows, and children may have to wait on their monthly benefits checks due to the Government shutdown," it begins. "Unfortunately, some veterans and their families may become budget casualties," said VA Secretary Jesse Brown.

Suggesting that veterans—many of whom sustained grave injuries and lost close friends and family members in battle—could become casualties themselves, this time of a budget war, is tasteless and extreme. It is shocking to me that the U.S. Government would dishonor our veterans this way, playing on their fears and resorting to these kinds of tactics in an attempt to score political points for the President.

In his press release, Secretary Brown claims that all President Clinton has asked for from Congress is a stopgap spending bill free of controversial riders. That is precisely what Congress will deliver to the President this week—a stopgap bill that gives him the funds he needs to run the Government, and asks him to pledge he will work together with Congress to balance the budget within 7 years. Yet even before he sees our bill, President Clinton is vowing to veto it.

Mr. President, the men and women who have so proudly served in this Nation's Armed Forces will not be left in the cold, and to suggest that the Gov-

ernment would ever allow that to happen is the height of irresponsibility. By signing the temporary spending legislation this Congress is preparing to send to the White House, veterans benefits would be designated as an essential Government service. I urge the President to do so, so that this Nation's veterans will continue to receive their monthly benefit checks on schedule and without delay.

The press release from the Department of Veterans Affairs, however, underscores the lengths this administration is willing to go as they attempt to derail our efforts to balance the budget. But do not be taken in by the political rhetoric—it is inflammatory and it is harsh, but it is nothing but rhetoric. A similar situation occurred earlier this year, when the President tried to gain some political mileage scaring senior citizens with his Medicare misinformation. And so it was only a matter of time before he would go after the Nation's veterans, too.

It is indeed unfortunate that this President is so out of touch with the military and the sacrifices demanded by those who serve in uniform that he would attempt to frighten American veterans in such a manner.

Mr. President, I urge my colleagues to join me in denouncing these desperate tactics. They disgrace our veterans and serve no useful purpose in the very serious debate over the financial future of this great Nation.

REPORT OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION MAKING FURTHER CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 1996—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT—PM 96

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Committee on Appropriations.

*To the Congress of the United States:*

In declaring my intention to disapprove House Joint Resolution 122, the further continuing resolution for fiscal year 1996, I stated my desire to approve promptly a clean extension of the continuing resolution that expired on November 13. Accordingly, I am forwarding the enclosed legislation that would provide for such an extension. This legislation also provides that all Federal employees furloughed during the Government shutdown through no fault of their own will be compensated at their ordinary rate for the period of the furlough.

I urge the Congress to act on this legislation promptly and to return it to me for signing.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON.

THE WHITE HOUSE, November 16, 1995.

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 9:02 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by

Mr. Hays, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following joint resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.J. Res. 122. Joint resolution making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 1996, and for other purposes.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

The message also announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bill:

S. 395. An act to authorize and direct the Secretary of Energy to sell the Alaska Power Administration, and to authorize the export of Alaska North Slope crude oil, and for other purposes.

The enrolled bill was signed subsequently by the President pro tempore (Mr. THURMOND).

At 3:47 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Goetz, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House agrees to the report of the committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 2126) making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1996, and for other purposes.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER  
COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, which were referred as indicated:

EC-1598. A communication from the Director of the Defense Finance and Accounting Service, the Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, a cost comparison study of Vendor Pay function supporting the Defense Commissary Agency; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-1599. A communication from the Chairman of the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report on the status of internal audit and investigative activities for fiscal year 1995; to the Committee on Armed Services.

PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

The following petitions and memorials were laid before the Senate and were referred or ordered to lie on the table as indicated:

POM-466. A resolution adopted by the Salinas City Firefighters of Salinas, CA, relative to the Ward Valley of the East Mojave; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

POM-467. A petition from the attorney general of the State of Hawaii relative to proposed legislation entitled "The Medicare Preservation Act of 1995"; to the Committee on Finance.

POM-468. A petition from a citizen of the State of Kansas for a redress of grievances; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

POM-469. A resolution adopted by the Senate of the Legislature of the State of Michigan; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

"SENATE RESOLUTION No. 30.

"A resolution to memorialize the Congress of the United States regarding voluntary, individual, unorganized, and non-mandatory prayer in public schools.