

prepare to come back in the morning to take up that work. But I think, in the interests of the Members, we would want to hold ourselves available for as late as what might be reasonable, in the hopes that we might be able to get our folks on an early morning plane, if that is an option available. So we will be trying to evaluate that and make an announcement as we get better information.

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, I would ask the gentleman, understanding the difficulty in guesstimating what time this is all going to culminate, let me ask my friend from Texas one other question. On Monday next, has he made any decisions about when we should be here for the first vote?

Mr. ARMEY. Again, I thank the gentleman for his inquiry. The fact is that, again, to a large extent, we are waiting to see what happens with the current work under consideration between the House and Senate, but I think a prudent advice I could give the Members would be to be prepared to be back in the Chamber by noon on Monday. Again, if I have any news to share on that later on, and hopefully good news, I will announce it, but I would be prepared, I think, to return to the Chamber on noon on Monday.

Mr. BONIOR. I thank my colleague.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MCCRERY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 2586, the bill about to be considered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GOODLATTE). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Louisiana?

There was no objection.

TEMPORARY INCREASE IN THE STATUTORY DEBT LIMIT

Mr. MCCRERY. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to the rule, I call up the bill (H.R. 2586) to provide for a temporary increase in the public debt limit, and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 258, the gentleman from Louisiana [Mr. MCCRERY] will be recognized for 30 minutes, and the gentleman from Florida [Mr. GIBBONS] will be recognized for 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Louisiana [Mr. MCCRERY].

Mr. MCCRERY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the subject of this bill, of course, is a short-term extension of the Nation's debt limit. This short-term extension is intended to provide an orderly process, with sufficient time for the Congress and the President to consider the balanced budget bill that will shortly be sent to the President. It is now clear that some type of pressure

must be applied to bring the differing views together and to resolve this problem.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 2586 would temporarily increase the statutory limit on the public debt to \$4.967 trillion. It would do so until December 12, 1995. Under the bill, the limit would then revert to \$4.8 trillion. H.R. 2586 also ensures the financial integrity of Government trust funds invested in Government debt obligations subject to the debt limit.

Mr. Speaker, this bill today is necessary because the Congress, the legislative branch, under our Constitution, is responsible for authorizing any debt to be incurred by the U.S. Government. That is an obligation which we must take very seriously, and consider very carefully. Some in this Chamber are reluctant to increase the Nation's debt limit at all. I understand that, Mr. Speaker.

However, we all recognize that this Government has made commitments and entered into obligations that must eventually be paid, so in an effort to accommodate those obligations and in an effort to accommodate this body and the executive branch with time to deliberate matters of great importance to the country, including balancing this Nation's budget in 7 years, this bill comes to us today. We believe this bill is not only necessary, but entirely appropriate, and we will get into more of the details as the debate continues.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, my fine and much-admired friend, the gentleman from Louisiana, has stated some of this bill, but perhaps he knows more about it than I do. He says that it is just a temporary legislation. The first page or so is temporary, but the other 400-and-some pages in this bill, and the pages that will perhaps be adopted here by additional amendments, are not temporary legislation. They are very permanent legislation. They do drastic things to this U.S. Government. They do it without debate, without consideration, or anything else.

The only reason we are here at this late hour and under this kind of confusing circumstances is because the Republicans have not been able to get their act together, to get their majority control together, and to do the things that should have been done. We are here on November 9 to do the work that should have been done in July of this same year.

The Republicans keep howling and screaming that the President will not bargain with them, but how, Mr. Speaker, can the President bargain with them? They have no budget bill. They have not even had a meeting on their budget bill in 2 weeks. I know. I am a conferee. I have not even gotten a notice, or, as one Member said, a postcard about a meeting of the conferees to iron out the differences in the

budget resolution. We are about 4 months behind on the budget, the Congress is, because the Republicans cannot muster a majority on their side to get anything done.

We are here at this late hour attempting to blackmail the President into signing something that he will never sign. The President is not subject to blackmail. He has enough sense not to give in to that kind of treatment. He is not going to sign this ridiculous trash here, most of which is only put together, as the gentleman from Louisiana said, temporarily, so they can get enough votes together to get this thing through the House. They are going to drop all these amendments. Their Members ought to understand that. None of this is ever going to become law. It is only here so that the Republicans can be coerced or bribed or twisted their arms or whatever you want to call it to vote for this thing. It is not going to happen.

It is a terrible way to run the Government. It is a terrible reflection upon the Republican Party that they cannot do a simple thing, which is strike out one figure in a piece of legislation and add another figure. That is all that is here. We have done it hundreds of times in the years that I have been here without all of this rankle, all of this other garbage that has been added to it.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very, very poor and disastrous way to run the Government. It is a terrible reflection upon the Republican Party. We Democrats do not have control of this body. We do not set the agenda. We do not have the ability to produce a majority vote. It is all within their power. It is all within their ability. It is all within their responsibility. They cannot get up here and pretend that it is anybody's responsibility except theirs.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCCRERY. Mr. Speaker, it is with a great deal of pleasure that I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. CLINGER], one of the most distinguished Members of the Chamber, and chairman of the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight.

Mr. CLINGER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman very much for yielding time to me.

I guess we will have to put the gentleman from Florida [Mr. GIBBONS] as undecided on this matter.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is more, really, much more than an increase in the debt limit. It is really a down payment on the promise that we have made to make government smaller and more responsive to the American people. It is crucial that we refocus government on those essential functions that it must perform, and reconsider whether government should be involved in any activity which it cannot do well.

We presently are involved in a great many activities, Mr. Speaker, that we do not do well. The reason we have to