

passed and been signed into law on October 1.

By just this week, I believe we now have seven that have been signed into law. We still have six, and they are fairly big ones, that have not been signed into law. Some of them have not even been taken up by the other body.

I yield to the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. DURBIN], a member of the Committee on Appropriations.

Mr. DURBIN. I would like to report to my colleague from West Virginia that I just left the conference committee on the District of Columbia. The gentleman would not believe what is going on there.

The Republicans have failed to enact the District of Columbia appropriations bill which was due October 1. We are now almost 3 months into this fiscal year. The District of Columbia Government, their local funds as well as Federal funds, are all appropriated funds, so this government is literally running without authority.

In providing police protection, they are trying to keep the streets safe for us to drive on, they are trying to keep the community as safe as they can for the tourists who are visiting Washington, and some of my colleagues who have just joined me on the floor here from the State of Georgia as well as from the State of Wisconsin blame President Clinton for this. They said the President is responsible, and yet the fact is we have not sent the appropriation bill to the President, almost 3 months into this fiscal year.

A REPUBLICAN VIEW OF THE BUDGET PROCESS

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

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I want to take up where the gentleman from West Virginia just left off. That is, when we talk about in the short term why is the Government in this partial shutdown mode, as it has been called, the gentleman is mechanically correct when he explains how our systems work, that a number of agencies are funded through a total of 13 separate appropriations bills, and of those 13 appropriations bills, 7 have been passed by Congress and signed by the President.

□ 1630

Once that occurs, there is no longer a need for a continuing resolution to be passed to keep these agencies open, which is to say the agencies function whether there is or whether there is not a continuing resolution.

However, the gentleman did not mention the fact that with respect to the other six appropriations bills, three of them were passed by the Congress and were just recently vetoed by the President of the United States. The appropriations bill for the Veterans' Administration and independent agencies, for the Department of the Interior and for

the Departments of Commerce, State, and Justice, those are contained in three bills that the President vetoed. If the President of the United States had signed the appropriations bills for those agencies, they would be open right now regardless of the impasse over a continuing resolution.

Now, it is important to say that the Democratic side has continually said why does the Congress not do its job and pass appropriations bills, but when we do pass appropriations bills, the President vetoes them.

The gentleman is suggesting that is up to the President of the United States to sign appropriations bills as part of his duties. I do not think they are going to suggest that.

I would like to make the further point, Mr. Speaker, that the President vetoed these bills, these three bills because he felt the amount of spending or other policies within them does not fit his long-term view of where the Government should be going. The President has that prerogative under the Constitution to veto appropriations bills, or any other bills, for that matter. There is a specific procedure in the Constitution for that.

The point I am making is there is no difference, no difference at all, between the President tying long-term policy to his vetoing three appropriations bills which would have reopened those agencies today and the Congress tying the continuing resolution for the rest of the agencies or these agencies, too, without an appropriations bill to Congress' view of a long-term policy for the Government. Both sides are now doing the same thing.

The brings me to the central point of where why I took the floor right now, which is to talk about that long-range policy. Both sides, both the President and the Congress, have said we want to reach a balanced budget, and I hope that goes without saying. The national debt right now is almost \$5 trillion that our children and grandchildren will have to pay back someday.

Further, the interest we have to pay on this borrowed money, and we pay interest on money we borrow like any individual would or any business would, the interest we pay is over \$200 billion a year. That is more than 10 percent of our current budget.

When I talk about the effect, when I hear talk about the effect of spending on programs, imagine how much we could spend on important programs or allowing tax reductions if we had the use of \$200 billion plus a year that taxpayers already send to Washington and, from an economic point of view, we throw out the window because interest buys you nothing. But we have to pay it in order to borrow more, just like anyone else would.

When the Government went through this partial shutdown a month ago, the Government was reopened under an agreement between the President and the Congress that said, among other things, that by the end of the year the parties would reach a balanced budget

in 7 years, using the Congressional Budget Office economic projections, although the Congressional Budget Office was expected to, and I believe has, consulted with other agencies and other individuals, and protect certain spending programs. The Congress passed a budget that the Congress believes meets all of those requirements.

Now, I do not agree with every single item and every single choice in that budget. But the Congress as a whole, the majority, believes that it meets the requirements of our agreement of a month ago.

As everyone knows, the President vetoed that budget, vetoed it on the basis it did not adequately protect his spending priorities. Again, that is the President's prerogative.

What the Congress is saying now is, Mr. President, if you believe that the budget we passed does not comply with your priority of spending, show us what your priority of spending is under the terms of an agreement; in other words, put out a budget proposal which is balanced in 7 years and which uses Congressional Budget Office economic projections, and then show us how you would protect your priorities. There is nothing in that that says how the President of the United States has to set spending levels. There is nothing in there that says he has to cut spending for programs or anything else, only that the President of the United States abide by the agreement he made a month ago.

Today the Vice President of the United States said the President refuses to comply with the agreement he made a month ago, and that is why we are at this impasse right now.

THE BUDGET IMPASSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COBLE). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland [Mr. HOYER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, the American public must be very perplexed. In addition, of course, we know that they are very angry and, very frankly, a number of us that sit in this body are very angry.

We began this session with the election of a new leadership. Speaker GINGRICH announced a new order, an order committed to revolutionary change. We have had, to some degree, a revolution. It is not, as so many revolutions are, not a pretty thing to watch.

The Contract With America, which was the plan of this so-called revolution, talked about, in two of its first three items, responsibility, personal responsibility, and fiscal responsibility. Personal responsibility was urged on all Americans to do that which would make their lives better and, consequently, the lives of their families and their communities and their State and Nation better and more productive, more successful.

We have been debating that contract for the last 11 months, and very frankly it has not gone very far. One of the reasons it has not gone very far is because the Republicans in the Senate could not agree with the Republicans in the House. Frankly, the Democrats have not been able to defeat or pass much on their own. We understand that, we are in the minority.

Now we come to funding Government. Personal responsibility would say that each and every one of us ought to share the most efficient and effective operations of the people's Government; reduce it, change it, eliminate some activities, do all of that, but ensure that those activities that we support operate in an efficient and effective manner. The Republican leadership has failed miserably in that effort. Because of Democrats? No. In the first instance, when this fiscal year ended September 30, the Republican leadership had failed to pass any appropriations bills to fund Government. Not 1 of the 13.

My colleague points out that perhaps we passed the legislative bill prior to the first of October, and that was, of course, vetoed because the President thought it unseemly that we take care of ourselves first before we took care of other people's business, and he made a good point.

The Republicans passed a short-term CR that expired, and they had yet to pass the appropriation bills that the President would sign and, indeed, as of today have seven bills that have yet to be passed into law.

Now, ladies and gentleman, we have come to a point where the President, President Clinton, the majority leader BOB DOLE, and the Speaker, NEWT GINGRICH, sat down together at the White House last night and said, "As reasonable people, let us work this out," and the reports I received this morning were that the Speaker thought that was a positive meeting. Senator DOLE, the majority leader, thought that was a reasonable meeting. The President of the United States thought that that was a positive, productive meeting, and the three leaders came out and said, "We think we have a construct to move forward."

And then what happened? The Republican freshmen apparently thought that was not enough. The Republican freshmen want a guarantee that the President would agree to certain things that he believes are not in the best interests of this country, cutting Medicare deeply, cutting Medicaid deeply, cutting education for young people, which he believes, and I share his views is an investment in the future of America, undermining programs that protect our environment.

In point of fact, in the last legislation we passed to keep Government working, both parties agreed that that would be part of it. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the freshmen Republicans have demanded that Government shut down until the President gives up.

That is not right.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. VOLKMER. Mr. Speaker, I have a parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will state his parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. VOLKER. Mr. Speaker, is it out of order that anyone in this 5-minute time be given additional time under unanimous consent?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under special order speeches extensions of time are not allowed.

Mr. VOLKMER. I thank the Chair.

THE EFFECTS OF THE GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN ON FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

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

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Speaker, there is no good reason why 260,000 Federal employees should be shut out of their jobs, particularly at Christmastime. This is unprecedented to punish Federal employees because they chose to be civil servants. But that is what this body is doing. And to do it at Christmastime, when virtually all of these Federal employees have children, have been looking forward to Christmas, would like to be out shopping after they finish work each day, but they cannot. They do not know whether they will be paid.

They are aware of the press conference that the Speaker had where he alluded to the fact that a great many Republican Members of this body, particularly freshman, are opposed to reimbursing Federal employees for this period of time when they have been locked out of their jobs. Imagine the strain, imagine the anxiety, imagine the sadness on the part of their children when they see the toll this is taking on their parents.

I have been told by teachers, by one of the principals, in fact, of an elementary school in my district where a lot of Federal employees send their children, that their children are not acting like this is Christmas. Normally, you have pageants and children jumping up and down and squealing with laughter and looking forward in anticipation of Santa Claus. But we have stolen their Christmas from them this year, because their parents cannot afford to go out and buy presents. Their parents have no reason to be happy. Their parents do not know what is going to happen to them, because it is in our hands.

We control what this Christmas will be like for these thousands of Federal employees. And it is wrong. It does not have any reason to be tied to a 7-year balanced budget.

You know, you look back at history, when we have had conflicts between the majority in the Congress and the executive branch, when President Reagan had a conflict with the Democratic Congress in 1987, we went the whole year on a continuing resolution.

President Reagan never thought of sending Federal employees home and punishing them and locking them out of their job just because he could not agree with the Congress. Certainly, the Democratic Congress never for a moment thought that they would punish Federal employees like that.

In 1988 we had the same situation, a continuing resolution all year. And now we cannot even get a continuing resolution for the 3 days of Christmas, for this Christmas weekend. We cannot even get this continuing resolution to let Federal employees function and to open up the Government.

□ 1645

Why? Because certain Members on the Republican side of the aisle are saying "It is our way or no way." They just passed a resolution, I am told it was unanimous, I cannot believe it was unanimous because there are good people on the Republican side of the aisle, to say that there will not be a continuing resolution unless the President agrees to the entire 7-year balanced budget. It is wrong, it has got to stop, and the American people have to get to say no, this is not what we want from our Government.

AMERICANS SUPPORT PRESIDENT ON BUDGET IMPASSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COBLE). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. FATTAH] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FATTAH. Mr. Speaker, I do not rise as normally when Members ask for an opportunity to revise their remarks and extend them. I would like my remarks to be recorded as I speak them. In this case, because I think that what we need to focus on is the simplest assertion of the truth.

We have a Republican majority that is trying to sell something that no one is buying. The American public has rejected, almost 2 to 1, their budget proposal for this Nation. They offer us on one hand a budget that would cut education, Head Start, Pell Grant opportunities for youngsters to go to college, increase the cost of student loans, and cut teacher training programs.

In every poll that has been done, the American public indicates that they do not agree with this budget. They are trying to sell a budget to the President of the United States, and he has vetoed it. He has said that he will not add his signature, he will not join in a conspiracy to rob this great country of ours from developing its fullest potential. He will not join in attempts to cut millions of young people in terms of their needs, in terms of health care and Medicaid, to further burden senior citizens and their families when they are in need of nursing home care. So, because the Nation and the President have rejected their budget product, they have