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House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore [Mr. COBLE].

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
July 29, 1996.

I hereby designate the Honorable HOWARD COBLE to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NEWT GINGRICH,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING BUSINESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of May 12, 1995, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 30 minutes, and each Member except the majority and minority leader limited to not to exceed 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. GEKAS] for 5 minutes.

NO MORE GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWNS

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, no more Government shutdowns. That seems like a silly warning in the middle of the summer, when the end of the fiscal year still is 2 months ahead of us. The fiscal year, as everyone knows, for the Congress of the United States, for the Government of the United States, ends on September 30. If indeed there be no budget enacted by that date, then the next day the Government has to shut down, unless one of two things could occur: One, a full budget would be passed in the last hours so that a new budget would be in place on the first day of the new fiscal year, October 1; or the Congress, in its wisdom, along with an agreement from the White House to issue a temporary funding stream to allow the negotiators more time to bring about a full budget, would enter into a continuing resolution, a temporary funding mechanism, from October 1, to, let us say, November 1, giving another month to the negotiators to bring about what we all hope would be the case, a full budget for the next fiscal year.

But what has happened quite often, especially in the last year, and dating way back to 1985, in my own experience in the Congress, the Congress has failed to bring about a budget by September 30, and has had to indulge in these temporary funding measures. At the end of each one of those, when there is a breakdown in negotiations, then there occurs the threat of a Government shutdown or an actual shutdown.

Let me give you the most egregious example of what occurred when, in one previous session, the Congress failed to bring about a budget by September 30.

Our youngsters, the members of the Armed Forces in that era, 1991, were gathering in the deserts of the Middle East under Desert Shield, the deployment of our troops in preparation for Desert Storm.

In December 1990, they were all gathered, 300,000 or 400,000 strong, our young men and women, our fellow citizens, our Armed Forces, and in the middle of their preparation to do battle with the forces of Saddam Hussein, there was a Government shutdown.

Now, is that not a sad thing to contemplate, to have the Armed Forces ready to do battle, and their Government, our country, shuts down its Government?

This did not deter them, this event back home, from continuing to gear up for the eventual battle. But the point is, how can we as a people and Congress continue to sustain the threat of a Government shutdown, for any purpose? Not only does it look awful, and it is awful, but then there are payless paydays for people who work for the Federal Government, there is the threat of Social Security checks and veterans benefits and other matters on which fellow citizens rely which would come to a sleekening halt, or special measures would have to take place to do them.

Anyway, we have to end Government shutdowns. Now, I have proposed, since 1988 I believe, almost every year, and I have gone before the relevant committees to discuss this issue, and I came up with a proposal. My fear is that it will not pass because it makes common sense, but I am going to keep trying.

Here is the way this works: If on September 30, the end of the fiscal year, there is no new budget in place, then on October 1, the next day, automatically under my proposal there would be reenacted and will come into play last year's budget automatically, until a new budget can be enacted.

That means that there will never be a Government shutdown as long as we operate in the Congress of the United States. Because even if they enter into a continuing resolution, the temporary funding mechanism, at the end of that period, if they still have not produced a budget, where today we would have the threat of a Government shutdown, we would have an instant replay of the then current temporary funding measure, thus Government would go on until the budget is put into its final face.

That is what I have proposed. Now, there are some questions. Does this rob the appropriators, the people whose job it is to produce the appropriations bills, to have them signed by the President? We think not.

Mr. Speaker, it is time to end Government shutdowns.

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MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. McDevitt, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate had passed with an amendment in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 3540. An act making appropriations for foreign operations, export financing, and related programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1997, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the Senate insists upon its amendment to the bill (H.R. 3540) ''An act making appropriations for foreign operations, export financing, and related programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1997, and for other purposes,'' requests a conference with the House of Representatives on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses thereon, and appoints Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. SPECTER, Mr. MACK, Mr. JEFFORDS, Mr. GREGG, Mr. SHELBY, Mr. BENNETT, Mr. HATFIELD, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. INOUYE, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mr. HARKIN, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mrs. MURRAY, and Mr. BYRD to be the conferees on the part of the Senate.

TAX LEGISLATION FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia [Ms. NORTON] is recognized during morning business for 5 minutes.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I have put in a unique remedy for a catastrophic financial crisis in the District of Columbia. Questions have been raised about it. I think I and the people I represent are due the courtesy of a moratorium on off-the-cuff conclusions about the bill until they are fully briefed.

The reasons, of course, for my bill, for a tax cut for the District, lie in the unique disadvantages of the city and the unique remedy it will take to solve them.

We lost more residents in the first half of the 1990's than we did in the entire 1980's. Perhaps we share that in common with other cities, but virtually nothing else. Uniquely, we have no way to recoup revenue when we lose people.

Leon Panetta, a personal friend and a friend of the District, spoke on television yesterday about my bill. In virtually every respect he was way off the mark. For example, Leon said congresspeople would be able to get this tax cut. They do not pay D.C. income taxes. The law requires them to be citizens of their own States.

Imagine the pain in my District when they heard opposition to a tax cut to the District because it would be unfair to other cities. I never would have put the tax cut bill in in the first place if we had a State like other cities. We are the only city in the United States which has State responsibilities and State costs, and no State. Seventy-five percent of the money that big cities get, they get from external sources, such as State aid.

I do not oppose Mr. Panetta's notion that we ought to have some tax-based remedy for other cities. I welcome it. I would be thrilled. But do not hang a bunch of unique responsibilities around our necks and then say when it comes to relief, the same relief must go to those who do not have those unique responsibilities.

There are four reasons, briefly, why I have put this bill in. We are the only city required to pay for State, county, and municipal functions. That means that we pay for Medicaid. Thirty-seven States get a greater Federal contribution for Medicaid than the District of Columbia.

We are the only city with no State to recycle income from wealthier areas. Detroit has Michigan, Mr. Panetta. New York City has New York State. We have nobody.

We are the only city barred by Congress from a commuter tax, and commuters take two-thirds of the revenue out, use our services, and leave nothing, not one thin dime in tax revenue.

Finally, my constituents were particularly pained because apparently no notice has been taken of the fact that we are second per capita in Federal income taxes, with no full voting representation in the House or the Senate. Four territories, which have the same delegate to Congress as the District has, have paid no, I repeat, no Federal income taxes.

Yes, I have asked for a unique remedy, because there are unique responsibilities. If you want to enlarge that to include the other great cities of the United States, be my guest. It would be magnificent.

Finally we would get an urban policy. The Control Board that Congress has set up is not reviving the economy of the District. It is in fact reviving the government of the District. But taxpayers are leaving at such a rate that your Capital of the United States is dissolving as I speak, and nobody, not the administration, and not soon enough the Congress, is stepping up to save it in time.

It will be too late 3 years from now. If there is to be a tax cut, let it be now, so there be time for it to kick in. If not a tax cut, then I challenge Mr. Panetta and every Member of this body to come up with a remedy during this session.

It is your Capital City. It may be my home as a fourth generation Washingtonian, but 200 years ago, you set up the Capital of the United States and you gave it special and peculiar disabilities. Are you going to let if go out of existence? Are you going to treat Washington, DC, less than England would treat London? Are you going to treat Washington, DC, less than France would treat Paris?

Do not compare the District of Columbia to Detroit, New York, Atlanta, or San Francisco, unless you give the people I represent the same citizenship rights and the same aid that those cities get. This is your Capital. Treat it as your Capital. Do not leave us stranded, swinging in the breeze, by the neck.

COMMENTS ON WELFARE REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. HOKE] is recognized during morning business for 5 minutes.

Mr. HOKE. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia. I think she is absolutely right, and I think that it is time that we try a different approach with the District. We have seen a failed policy of liberalism that has brought this District to what it is, and I think it is absolutely appropriate that at this time in the District's history, we should take advantage of the situation that we have here, and we should do something that is opportunity-oriented, that is incentive-oriented, using a different approach, and see what the results will be. I am absolutely confident that the results that the gentlewoman is looking for will in fact come about, and I am going to support her in her efforts. I appreciate the courage that the gentlewoman has taken to undertake this.

Mr. Speaker, I want to speak about the welfare bill that we dealt with last week. I want to start out, I came across a number of I think fascinating quotations from the State of the Union address in 1935 by Franklin D. Roosevelt. I want to read some of those to you.

Mr. Roosevelt said:

The lessons of history confirmed by the evidence immediately before me show conclusively that continued dependence upon relief induces a spiritual and moral disintegration, fundamentally destructive to the national fiber. To dole out relief in this way is to administer a narcotic, a subtle destroyer of the human spirit. It is inimical to the dictates of sound policy. It is in violation of the traditions of America. The Federal Government must and shall quit this business of relief.

This is Franklin Roosevelt in 1935. He goes on to say, ''In the days before the Great Depression, people were cared for by local efforts.''

Listen to this carefully. It sounds as though it was written for a speech for the new majority's welfare plan of 1996. Specifically the idea of sending power out of this city and back to States, communities, localities, churches, synagogues, et cetera.

He says:

In the days before the Great Depression, people were cared for by local efforts, by states, by counties, by towns, cities, by churches, and by private welfare agencies. It is my thought that in the future they must be cared for as they were before. I stand ready through my personal efforts and through the public influence of the office that I hold, to help these local agencies to get the means necessary to assume this burden.

Are you listening, President Clinton?