THE WHITE HOUSE, *April 11, 1997.*

POSTPONING FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 62 UNTIL AFTER VOTES UNDER SUSPENSION OF THE RULES

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that during consideration of House Joint Resolution 62, pursuant to House Resolution 113, notwithstanding the order of the previous question, it may be in order at any time for the Chair to postpone further consideration of the joint resolution until a time designated by the Speaker after disposition of any motions to suspend the rules on which proceedings were proposed earlier in the day.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

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PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 62, TAX LIMITATION CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 113 and ask for its immediate consolidation.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 113

Resolved, That upon the adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 62) proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States with respect to tax limitations. An amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text recommended by the Committee on the Judiciary now printed in the joint resolution, modified by the amendment specified in the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution, shall be considered as adopted. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the joint resolution, as amended, and on any further amendment thereto to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) three hours of debate on the joint resolution, as amended, which shall be equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Judiciary; (2) one motion to amend, if offered by the minority leader or his designee, which shall be considered as read and shall be separately debatable for one hour equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent; and (3) one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore [Mr. GOODLATTE]. The gentlewoman from Ohio [Ms. PRYCE] is recognized for 1 hour.

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. MOAKLEY], distinguished ranking member of the Committee on Rules, pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on this resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 113 is a straightforward rule providing for consideration in the House of House Joint Resolution 62, the tax limitation constitutional amendment.

The rule provides for 3 hours of debate, equally divided between the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Judiciary. The amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on the Judiciary, modified by the amendment specified in the report, will be considered as the base text for the purpose of amendment.

What that means is that the rule enacts a very important amendment sponsored by the gentleman from Florida [Mr. MCCOLLUM], a senior member of the Committee on the Judiciary, which would simply ensure that the tax limitation amendment would not have the unintended consequences of making it harder to reduce taxes in the future, a very important consideration as we move toward the dynamic scoring of major tax relief and economic growth legislation.

The rule also provides for the consideration of an amendment if offered by the minority leader or his designee. The amendment shall be considered as read and shall be debatable for 1 hour equally divided and controlled by a proponent and an opponent.

Finally, the rule provides for one motion to recommit with or without instructions. So under the rule, Mr. Speaker, our friends in the minority will have two different opportunities to amend the legislation in any way they see fit, consistent with the normal rules of the House.

Mr. Speaker, it is no coincidence that the House takes up the consideration of a constitutional tax limitation amendment today, April 15, as millions of taxpayers file their Federal income taxes. This is the day in which millions of hard-working Americans and their families are all too sharply reminded that high taxes have become a cruel and harsh fact of life in the United States of America.

What many Americans are experiencing today is middle class tax anxiety as they feel that they are working harder than ever but falling further behind. That is why so many constituents tell me that they fear the next generation will not be as fortunate or as prosperous as their generation, and why they believe their children and grandchildren will be worse off financially than they are.

It is no wonder that so many families feel this way. The truth is for the past 40 years or so, the size, scope, and tax burden imposed by the Federal Government has grown year in and year out. In 1980, the average tax burden was $2,286 per person. By 1995, that figure had more than doubled to $4,996. Federal, State, and local taxes take more than 38 cents out of every dollar the American family earns, and that estimation is almost as high as 50 cents in some quarters.

The Federal tax burden alone is now nearing a record one-fifth of family income. American families deserve better and they should be able to keep more of their hard-earned money to spend on things they need like food, clothing, shelter, perhaps a college education or even sometimes a family vacation. They do not need to send more of their tax dollars to Washington to be spent on a larger and larger Federal bureaucracy.

Regrettably, the power to lay and collect taxes, which was granted to Congress by the Founding Fathers, has been terribly abused. As ratified, the Constitution did not allow the direct taxation of the income of American citizens. For three-quarters of our history, three-quarters of our history the power of the U.S. Government to tax was carefully constrained by explicit constitutional restraints. For many decades the Federal Government was able to function without a permanent income tax, and it was not until 1913 when the 16th amendment to the Constitution was ratified that Congress was given specific authority to collect income taxes, and the Constitution's careful balance with respect to taxes was swept away.

As recently as 1940, Federal taxes were only 6.7 percent of the gross domestic product. Since the late 1960's, Federal taxes have approached 20 percent of GDP. Under our current system, it is simply too easy to add to the already onerous tax burden that Congress has placed on the American people.

Mr. Speaker, while many worthwhile arguments have been made against this constitutional amendment, the time has now come when we must return some fiscal discipline to the Federal Government where much of the discipline imposed by the Founding Fathers in the Constitution no longer exists.

That is exactly what this legislation seeks to do, to make it more difficult for Congresses in the future to raise taxes. The amendment will force Congress to focus on options other than raising taxes as a means of balancing the Federal budget. It does not mean, as some opponents have claimed, that taxes cannot be raised at all somewhere down the road. It merely requires a broader political consensus to achieve that goal. And the requirement can be waived temporarily, whenever a declaration of war is in effect or when the United States faces an imminent serious threat to its national security.

While we try to make it harder to raise taxes at the Federal level, several