

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

THE GEKAS GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN PREVENTION AMENDMENT

HON. GEORGE W. GEKAS

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 16, 1997

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, in approximately 2 weeks the U.S. House of Representatives will be voting on fiscal year 1997 supplemental appropriations bills. At the appropriate time, I intend to appear before the House Rules Committee to request that my Government shutdown prevention amendment be made in order. My amendment will provide fiscal year 1997 spending levels to continue at 98 percent through the end of fiscal year 1998, in the absence of regular appropriations or a continuing resolution.

Since my election to the House of Representatives in 1982, I have witnessed the enactment of 53 different continuing resolutions, including a whopping 14 during the 104th Congress alone. The absence of either a budget agreement or a stopgap spending bill has resulted in eight partial Government shutdowns during my 14 years in Congress.

In February 1989, I introduced legislation to put an end to these senseless interruptions of government operations. As originally drafted, my Automatic Continuing Resolution Act would allow the Government to continue to function at the prior year's funding levels should a lapse in appropriations occur. I often referred to this legislation as my instant replay bill, since it was a repeat of the previous year's appropriations measures.

Mr. Speaker, at the time, I knew I was facing an uphill battle in a long war. After all, the threat of a shutdown is one of the most effective weapons in the congressional arsenal. Every fiscal year, the then Democrat-led Congress routinely placed Presidents Reagan and Bush in the position of accepting its budget priorities, or else. If the White House refused to cooperate, Congress would grind large portions of the Federal Government to a complete halt. The shutdown threat, coupled and the public outcry that inevitably results from a lull in Government services, forced both Presidents to grudgingly submit to congressional spending priorities.

Obviously, a Congress jealous of its prerogatives was not going to give up this exceedingly effective tactic overnight. So I bided my time, and gradually garnered support for my legislation during the 101st, 102d, 103d, and 104th Congresses.

Mr. Speaker, without question, the time for enactment of the Gekas Government shutdown prevention amendment is now. The shutdown debacle of last winter has underscored the need to keep the Government operating without interruption. The 27-day shutdown jolted America's confidence in its elected officials, and caused reverberations that can still be felt today. We need to restore the public's faith in its leaders by showing that we have learned from our mistakes. Enactment of

this amendment will send a clear message to the American people that we will no longer allow them to be pawns in budget disputes between Congress and the White House.

AMENDMENT TO H.R. —, AS REPORTED,
OFFERED BY MR. GEKAS OF PENNSYLVANIA

At the appropriate place, add the following new title:

TITLE ____—PREVENTION OF GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN SHORT TITLE

SEC. ____ This title may be cited as the "Government Shutdown Prevention Act".

CONTINUING FUNDING

SEC. ____ (a) If any regular appropriation bill for fiscal year 1998 does not become law prior to the beginning of fiscal year 1998 or a joint resolution making continuing appropriations is not in effect, there is appropriated, out of any moneys in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, and out of applicable corporate or other revenues, receipts, and funds, such sums as may be necessary to continue any program, project, or activity for which funds were provided in fiscal year 1997.

(b) Appropriations and funds made available, and authority granted, for a program, project, or activity for fiscal year 1998 pursuant to this title shall be at 98 percent of the rate of operations that was provided for the program, project, or activity in fiscal year 1997 in the corresponding regular appropriation Act for fiscal year 1997.

(c) Appropriations and funds made available, and authority granted, for fiscal year 1998 pursuant to this title for a program, project, or activity shall be available for the period beginning with the first day of a lapse in appropriations and ending with the earlier of—

- (1) the date on which the applicable regular appropriation bill for fiscal year 1998 becomes law (whether or not that law provides for that program, project, or activity) or a continuing resolution making appropriations becomes law, as the case may be; or
- (2) the last day of fiscal year 1998.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

SEC. ____ (a) An appropriation of funds made available, or authority granted, for a program, project, or activity for fiscal year 1998 pursuant to this title shall be made available to the extent and in the manner which would be provided by the pertinent appropriations Act for fiscal year 1997, including all of the terms and conditions and the apportionment schedule imposed with respect to the appropriation made or funds made available for fiscal year 1997 or authority granted for the program, project, or activity under current law.

(b) Appropriations made by this title shall be available to the extent and in the manner which would be provided by the pertinent appropriations Act.

COVERAGE

SEC. ____ Appropriations and funds made available, and authority granted, for any program, project, or activity for fiscal year 1998 pursuant to this title shall cover all obligations or expenditures incurred for that program, project, or activity during the portion of fiscal year 1998 for which this title applies to that program, project, or activity.

EXPENDITURES

SEC. ____ Expenditures made for a program, project, or activity for fiscal year 1998

pursuant to this title shall be charged to the applicable appropriation, fund, or authorization whenever a regular appropriation bill or a joint resolution making continuing appropriations until the end of fiscal year 1998 providing for that program, project, or activity for that period becomes law.

INITIATING OR RESUMING A PROGRAM, PROJECT, OR ACTIVITY

SEC. ____ No appropriation or funds made available or authority granted pursuant to this title shall be used to initiate or resume any program, project, or activity for which appropriations, funds, or other authority were not available during fiscal year 1997.

PROTECTION OF OTHER OBLIGATIONS

SEC. ____ Nothing in this title shall be construed to effect Government obligations mandated by other law, including obligations with respect to Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and veterans benefits.

DEFINITION

SEC. ____ In this title, the term "regular appropriation bill" means any annual appropriation bill making appropriations, otherwise making funds available, or granting authority, for any of the following categories of programs, projects, and activities:

- (1) Agriculture, rural development, and related agencies programs.
- (2) The Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State, the judiciary, and related agencies.
- (3) The Department of Defense.
- (4) The government of the District of Columbia and other activities chargeable in whole or in part against the revenues of the District.
- (5) The Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and related agencies.
- (6) The Departments of Veterans and Housing and Urban Development, and sundry independent agencies, boards, commissions, corporations, and offices.
- (7) Energy and water development.
- (8) Foreign assistance and related programs.
- (9) The Department of the Interior and related agencies.
- (10) Military construction.
- (11) The Department of Transportation and related agencies.
- (12) The Treasury Department, the U.S. Postal Service, the Executive Office of the President, and certain independent agencies.
- (13) The legislative branch.

DR. ROBERT "BOB" BUCHANAN: AN
EDUCATOR'S EDUCATOR

HON. JO ANN EMERSON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 16, 1997

Mrs. EMERSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute and say thanks to a 31-year veteran educator in our public school system. The superintendent of Sikeston schools, Dr. Robert "Bob" Buchanan, has decided to move on to life's next challenge.

Bob's retirement closes a remarkable chapter in Sikeston, Missouri's Public R-VI School

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