

We cannot sit on our hands and watch the President shred the Constitution and ignore the will of the Representatives of the American people. We must let everyone know that this body looks out for the interests of the American people, not the Government of Mexico.

CALCULATION OF CONSUMER PRICE INDEX SHOULD BE OUTSIDE POLITICS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 1995, the gentleman from Oregon [Mr. WYDEN] is recognized during morning business for 5 minutes.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. Speaker and colleagues, I am a Member of the House who has felt that the calculation of the Consumer Price Index for our country should be a concern that was outside politics, one that was going to be nonpartisan. Making sure that the Consumer Price Index is calculated accurately is of enormous importance to, for example, low-income senior citizens who depend on their Social Security to pay for their necessities, but it is also important to millions of middle-income taxpayers, because our brackets are now indexed for inflation, and the tax brackets and the personal exemption, the standard deduction. A number of these concerns for middle-income people are affected by the Consumer Price Index.

But recently it seems to me politics has been introduced to these discussions, because the Speaker has said that unless the Consumer Price Index is changed within the next 30 days, the agency that calculates it, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, would be zeroed out.

I think this is very unfortunate. We understand why someone might want to do this, because if you lower the Consumer Price Index, you can have a no-fingerprints way to cut the deficit by about \$150 billion, if you cut the Consumer Price Index by just 1 percentage point. But what you will do in the process is hurt those low-income seniors and, ironically, there are some new studies by the Bureau of Labor Statistics that show because of the high medical expenses of seniors their Consumer Price Index may be understated rather than overstated. So you will hurt those seniors.

But you will also hurt the middle-income taxpayers who will find they will be paying more in taxes as a result of these changes.

Now, I am one of the Democrats who voted on the first day of the session to make it tough to raise income taxes, because I thought it was important to protect small businesses and seniors and others. So last Friday, with the minority leader, the gentleman from Missouri [Mr. GEPHARDT], and a number of our colleagues, I introduced a piece of legislation stipulating that to cut the Consumer Price Index in this Congress and raise the taxes on middle-

income people and hurt low-income senior citizens you would have to comply with rule XXI that was passed the first day saying that a tax increase has got to be approved by a three-fifths majority. I am very hopeful that this bill will not be necessary.

I want that Consumer Price Index calculated on nonpartisan bases by professional economists, but if there is going to be an effort to politicize the Consumer Price Index, it will come out on the floor of the House of Representatives and cutting it and hurting the senior citizens and the middle-income taxpayers, for those who want to do it, they will have to comply with the rule making it tougher to raise income taxes.

SUPERFUND LIABILITY MORATORIUM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 1995, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. CANADY] is recognized during morning business for 5 minutes.

Mr. CANADY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer an avenue of relief to small businesses and individuals throughout the country who have done nothing wrong, but are nonetheless being held liable for the expensive task of Superfund site clean up.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, Congress passed the Superfund law in 1980 to clean up the country's most polluted waste sites. The merits of the Superfund effort are without question. Superfund sites are environmental disaster areas which have a clear potential for impact on public health and safety. Superfund sites must be cleaned up.

But while the Superfund law may have a noble purpose, the details are a nightmare. The framers of Superfund, adhering to the concept of "polluter pays," created a scheme of joint and several and retroactive liability. This wrongheaded provision has forced many individuals and small businesses to pay a portion of the clean up costs although they are not in fact responsible for the pollution.

Mr. Speaker, this structure has resulted in a notorious tangle of litigation and enforcement, and it has wreaked havoc on the lives of innocent citizens while accomplishing very little in the way of actual clean up.

These innocent individuals had no knowledge of the release of hazardous substances into the environment. They were simply trying to do the right thing by contracting with a third party for proper disposal. Now they are liable, under Superfund, for the cleanup of environmental disasters they did not create.

Such liability without culpability is patently unfair. It runs contrary to common sense and the fundamental requirements of justice. Further, it can be financially devastating to innocent individuals who are caught in the Superfund trap.

There is general agreement, in this body and elsewhere, that the Superfund liability structure must be changed. I am aware that the appropriate committees and subcommittees in both Houses of Congress are working on a comprehensive reform effort. I support this effort.

However, as Congress debates the shape and scope of reform, individuals in my district and elsewhere continue to be pursued and persecuted for something they did not do. This is not right, Mr. Speaker. We must stop this injustice and prevent this law from further disrupting the lives of innocent individuals.

It is for this reason that I introduced H.R. 795 last week to provide relief for innocent parties while we proceed with comprehensive reform of the law. My bill instructs the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency [EPA] to cease all agency actions against the nonpolluters. It also places a moratorium on the authority for contribution actions under the statute.

It is important, Mr. Speaker, to explain what my bill does not do. It does not abolish the Superfund Program, it does not repeal Superfund funding authority and it does not stop the clean up of Superfund sites. It allows the EPA to continue its enforcement actions against the true polluters—the culpable owners and operators of the contaminated sites and all others who had prior knowledge of illegal or environmentally harmful disposal activities.

H.R. 795 simply suspends the practice of financing Superfund clean ups on the backs of innocent people who had no knowledge of wrongdoing and no intent to harm the environment.

This legislation is needed to provide relief to the innocent individuals caught in the Superfund liability trap. The Superfund nightmare has gone on far too long. We should stop the injustice without further delay. I encourage my colleagues to join me in this effort.

THE LINE-ITEM VETO

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, today we have before the House the issue of the line-item veto, or did we really have a viable form of the line-item veto pending before this House? This could be a useful tool in the armamentarium of a President who is truly concerned about reducing the budget, a President who just does not want to use it in a political or punitive manner to go after a few programs, that he or she in the future could not convince the Congress to otherwise not fund.

But the question is, is this a viable form, or is it a grandly symbolic gesture, a gesture intended for the 84th birthday of ex-President Ronald

Reagan? We have heard that a lot from the other side.

Well, let us just recount a few of the Reagan years so we can get this in perspective. Remember, President Reagan promised the people of the United States of America that he would balance the budget by 1984. Instead, his administration worked hand in glove with Congress to pile up the greatest amount of debt ever seen for this Nation. It took us 200 years to amass the first \$900 billion of debt, but in a mere 8 years, President Reagan's administration more than tripled the national debt to over \$3 trillion. Yes, they talked a great game about reducing the deficit and balancing the budget, but they never ever submitted a balanced budget. They never ever even submitted a budget within \$100 billion of balance.

And then finally in the twilight years, in the last year of the Reagan administration, Budget Director Miller submitted a list of what he said Ronald Reagan would have used the line-item veto on if only he had that power.

The deficit in 1988 was \$150 billion. After tremendous efforts downtown at the White House, President Reagan and Mr. Miller came up with a list of \$1 billion in cuts that they would have made had they had the line-item veto. So instead of \$150 billion deficit, it would have been \$149 billion, and, of course, not a penny would have come from the Pentagon, the largest single source of general fund spending.

Last year we passed a constitutional version of a line-item veto called an enhanced rescission. This year we have before us an empty gesture. Clearly, the bill that will be voted on finally today, the Stenholm amendment, the bill we passed last year having been defeated in a vote last Friday on the floor of this House, is unconstitutional, and will be thrown out by the courts.

So if what we want is a grandly symbolic empty gesture, then vote "yes" on final passage today.

Happy birthday, of course, to the ex-President.

His legacy of a \$3 trillion will stand as a monument for generations of Americans to come. I would hope this House would begin to take real steps toward cutting the Federal deficit and the Federal debt and no more gestures. Do not vote today for this empty gesture.

THE PRESIDENT'S PROPOSED BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 1995, the gentleman from California [Mr. BAKER] is recognized during morning business for 1½ minutes.

Mr. BAKER of California. Mr. Speaker, in response, today President Clinton just introduced his budget, and if you heard, the previous speaker said the last 2 years of Ronald Reagan was \$150 billion in deficit and \$155. Today's budget introduced by President Clinton the deficit is \$210 billion.

The first 4 years of the Clinton administration will show a deficit of over \$1 trillion. This budget is not balanced.

But it is not the President's fault. It was not the President's fault for the last 26 years. Pick your favorite, was it Carter, was it Reagan, was it Ford, was it Clinton? Who is your favorite for unbalancing the budget? And the answer is this Congress. This Congress has had its foot on the accelerator for 26 years.

Never once has this Congress balanced the budget in 26 years. Never once has this Congress balanced the budget in 26 years.

Well, today is President Ronald Reagan's 84th birthday, and today we are going to give President Reagan and President Clinton a little present, and that is the line-item veto, because we need new tools. We have shown we cannot balance the budget ourselves.

Last week this Republican Congress passed the balanced budget amendment. This week we are going to give the President, whomever the President is, the tool to help us balance the budget with the line-item veto.

Let us remember it is not the President, it is the Congress. And we are going to allow the Executive and Congress to sit down together to continue to work toward a balanced budget in 2002 so that our grandchildren will not have to pay for the Government we use and are afraid to pay for.

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY AND THE LINE-ITEM VETO

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 1995, the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. KNOLLENBERG] is recognized during morning business for 1½ minutes.

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in strong support of the line-item veto which will effectively give the President the ability to strike out pork-barrel projects from otherwise good legislation.

The line-item veto will end the "Christmas Tree" practice of tacking on pet projects to wholly unrelated legislation—burying the details away from the public's eye.

Last year and in 1993 we saw this practice expand to an unprecedented level. The most flagrant abuse was after the city of Los Angeles was devastated by the earthquake. Congress eventually passed the emergency supplemental earthquake assistance bill, but not before slipping in \$10 million for a train station in New York, \$1.3 million for Hawaiian sugar cane mills, and \$20 million to add employees to the FBI in West Virginia.

This list of abuses goes on and on and the taxpayers are stuck with the bill and asked to pay more of their fair share. I don't think they would think that their share should include \$1.1 million for a national pig research facility in Iowa or \$35 million to eradicate screw worms in Mexico.

Mr. Speaker, tacking on these types of pet projects has become a runaway train and the American taxpayers are getting taken for a ride toward economic disaster. Let us keep the train on the tracks.

I urge all of my colleagues, on both sides of the aisle, to support this critical piece of legislation.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12, rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m.

Accordingly (at 1 o'clock and 9 minutes p.m.) the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore [Mr. LINDER] at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Rev. James David Ford, D.D., offered the following prayer:

Open our eyes, O gracious God, so that we may see the magnificence of Your creation; open our minds to the promises of Your true and lively word; open our ears to hear the words of others and to listen to their thoughts and experiences; open our intellect so we can understand the mysteries of knowledge and the fruits of wisdom, and open our hearts so we can love and forgive, so we can hope and have faith, so we can be thankful for all Your good gifts of life and the blessings of each new day. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House is approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Alabama [Mr. EVERETT] will please come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. EVERETT led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

PERMISSION FOR SUNDRY COMMITTEES AND SUBCOMMITTEES TO MEET TODAY DURING THE 5-MINUTE RULE

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the following