

public what I think is a very important issue that relates to our ability to control spending and provide a shared sacrifice in terms of our approach.

That came from the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on June 28, 1984, which then-Congressman Panetta was saying, yes, it is okay to put stuff on these bills. They are a good vehicle. This is the only way we can do it.

So, Mr. Speaker, when we talk about the Republican Party overloading some of the budget bills and trying to blackmail the President of the United States, I would say there are true philosophical differences. The Republican Party wants to reduce the size of Government. They want to end the micromanagement out of Washington. They want to give the middle class some tax relief.

Yes, we are using legislative vehicles to do that. Members of the minority party do not want that; I understand that. But perhaps if the President would just agree that we want to balance the budget in 7 years, perhaps we could scale back on all this stuff.

I think it is important to have the dialogue. I think it is important to have a debate, but, most importantly, let us put the American people first. Let us put their interests first and try to do the right thing.

THE VOTERS VOTED FOR CHANGE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida [Mrs. THURMAN] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. THURMAN. Mr. Speaker, today during the debate I was not given an opportunity, because we only had about 20 minutes on each side, to kind of explain what I think is a very important part of this process and a concern that I have. It concerns specifically when I came into the House in 1992, with about 110 freshmen, both Democrats and Republicans. Actually, there are several of them sitting on the floor tonight.

Let me tell my colleagues, when I listened to the debate today, I was astonished about hearing what happened in 1980. Oh, we had 52 CRs, and this is what has happened over and over and over again. Well, my folks did not send me here because they wanted to see business done as usual. They said they wanted a change. They wanted a difference. They wanted Government to run efficiently and effectively and they wanted to see things happen.

Democrats and Republicans in 1993, this same date, November 14, 1993, all 13 appropriations bills had been signed into law.

□ 2015

Do you know what? We had big fights. Do you know what we were able to do? We actually reduced discretionary spending. I think some of you remember that. We reduced discretionary spending. We came in under our caps. We cut 40 programs. We took

408 other programs, and we slashed them from the previous year's expenditures. We did that, and we still continued. 1994, every bill, one more time, was done again by September 30, signed into law, had gone to the President. Democrats and Republicans voted for it.

Now, I want to talk about what I see happening today. Let me tell you all what maybe some of you do not know. Do you know that the Agriculture Department is open? It is open today. Federal employees were not furloughed. They were not put under the same restraints. Farmers are going to be able to be taken care of, because this House had passed a bill, the Senate had passed a bill. They had a conference committee, which is the process. It is to take what the House and the Senate and look at the differences, reconcile them and then bring them back to each body for them to agree or disagree on. And we did that. We did the work. And it went to the President. It was signed into law. But let me tell you what has happened now on the other 12 bills.

Yes, some of them have been passed by the Senate and by the House. But what has happened is, in the conference committee, the conference committee, and I hate to be partisan, because when I came in here with my 110 new freshmen, we did not make it partisan. We sat down and got the work done. We decided what needed to be reconciled.

But now, for example, let me tell you what some of the issues are. The crime and judiciary programs are being delayed because Republican leaders insist on rewriting the 1994 community policing program. Okay. Rewrite it. Bring it back. You have the votes to pass it. But guess what is stopping it. Within their own Senate and House conferees on their side, they cannot reach a compromise. They cannot agree on how to do the policing program, one of the most popular programs that was done in the crime bill and was used by many of our communities.

Veterans and housing programs, something that every one of us stand on this floor and we talk about our veterans and what the sacrifices were. What is holding Veterans and Housing programs up? Want me to tell you? A bill that had riders that were 17 demands which would have weakened environmental laws. Okay?

Let me tell you what is so interesting about this, the House rejected the bill two times. They did not like the outcome. We passed the amendment, took the riders out. Did not like the outcome of it. Brought it back until they got the results. Sent it over to the Senate. The Senate said no. They brought it back to the House again. They cannot reconcile their differences between themselves so we have no spending bill so they are shut down.

Then we have the Interior appropriations bill that is being delayed. Why? Because there are some Members who want to give away American lands to

foreign mining interests. They cannot decide if they want to do that. So what has happened? We do not have an Interior bill.

The list goes on and on and on. We would not have to be doing what we are doing today and having the pressure put on if these bills had been done and signed. We would have had an opportunity to debate the other issues.

I think that is awful. But I have to tell you something, and I think that this is what is very interesting. First of all, let me suggest to you all, I called by district office, 21 new requests. I will come back here in about another hour because I have some other things that I want to thank the American people for doing, because I believe they are the reason why we have the difference.

Veterans and Housing programs are being delayed because Republicans have included 17 demands which would weaken environmental laws. The House has rejected this bill two times, yet Republicans don't get it.

The Interior appropriations bill is being delayed because some Members want literally to give away American lands to foreign mining interest.

All of these bills could now be law if only the excess baggage had been thrown overboard. For instance, while the rest of the Government is closing down, the Department of Agriculture is working. Why?

Because all sides were able to resolve their differences and put a fair bill on the President's desk and he signed it.

Some people are blaming the President for this action, but every school child knows that Congress makes law and the President executes them. If no bill has been passed, there is nothing to execute.

If you cannot pass the easiest of bills then you cannot direct the country.

The Republicans simply don't pass.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TAYLOR of North Carolina). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Mr. RIGGS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. RIGGS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

VOTERS REJECT GOP AGENDA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas, Mr. GENE GREEN, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I would like to discuss, and I am glad my colleague from Georgia talked about the concern of the American people because they hear a lot of different things from the different mikes on the floor. Oftentimes the frustration they have and some of us even in Congress do not know what to believe.

But let me just go over some of the poll results because I have never, as a Member of Congress or even in earlier life, serving many years in the legislature, responded to polls because I think

we need to represent people and not just polls. But the polls in the last few weeks are the best things we know, and the last month, of how Congress has been doing.

Two polls were released last week suggesting that the American people are increasingly unhappy with Congress and particularly the majority Republican Congress. One of them was conducted by the Wall Street Journal and NBC and one by the Los Angeles Times reveals that voters are rejecting the Republican agenda and their leaders in Congress and suggest that the battleground issues like Medicare will play a significant role in next year's elections.

First of all, the Wall Street Journal and the NBC poll said that 59 percent of American voters disapprove of the job Congress is doing. And this is an all-time high for the GOP Congress and places it close to our congressional disapproval last year before the 1994 elections.

The other poll talks about 1 year out from the 1996 elections, the Los Angeles Times poll released this Sunday shows Democrats ahead of Republicans for the first time since the 1994 elections, 44 percent to 42 percent. Again, not a landslide, but a year ago Democrats were down by 5 percent. Among seniors, a key voting block in 1996, Democrats are ahead of Republicans by 18 percentage points, 52 percent to 34 percent. And a year ago, Republicans held the edge among seniors 45 to 40 percent.

I am glad my colleague from Georgia talked about the need maybe for some type of truth meter on our mikes because I know the frustration of our constituents all over the country. But I think their frustration is being reflected in the polls I just mentioned.

Plain and simple, our Republican majority has mismanaged our financial affairs and our Government. They passed only 5 of the 13 appropriations bills which fund the Government. And the fiscal year started October 1, so we are over 45 days late, well, almost 45 days late. The media has been talking about a crisis within our Government. There is no real crisis if we had just been able to do our work on time by October 1 and passed those bills or to pass a continuing resolution so we can get on about our business of passing those bills.

Now the effort to blame the President for his alleged mismanagement. In fact, Republicans controlled both Houses after the 1994 elections, and they have the majority votes to be able to pass all 13 bills, obviously, prior to October 1 and send them on to the President. The President has only vetoed one bill, the legislative appropriations bill that I know is ready for him again to be sent back up, but of the two bills he signed, the Agriculture Department and one other one, those agencies are up and running. Employees are not being furloughed. However, it seems like our majority cannot come

to an agreement among themselves on these funding bills, and that is why we are so late.

In fact, we saw today in a report that I read just this afternoon that our Republican majority was planning this shutdown in July of this year. So it just did not happen on the 15th of November. It has been planned on because of this showdown and laying off Federal workers or furloughing them whether they are paid or not paid. If they are not paid, we are hurting a lot of hopefully employees that are dedicated to do their jobs, but if we are paying them, then the American people are wondering why are we furloughing people and then paying them when we finally bring them back. It is like an irresponsible student whose assignment, homework is late.

My wife is a teacher, an algebra teacher. She has told me this oftentimes that a student comes in and their homework is late. They are going to blame someone else. The dog ate it. I forgot it and left it at home, all sorts of reasons.

Well, the Republicans are blaming the President for not getting their work done. The President does not have a vote in this body. To cover up that irresponsibility, they are trying to strong-arm the President into getting their way, including to force him to raise Medicare premiums. I did say raise Medicare premiums, because right now Medicare premiums are \$46.10 a month, and they would go up under the continuing resolution that the President, thank goodness, vetoed to \$53.50 a month, and either that or shut down government.

Now we have the shutdown, and it is estimated it may take 2 weeks. And presenting the President with a choice like that is irresponsible and invites this crisis. Again today, we heard it was reported that as of * * * even in July * * *.

I would hope we would have a bipartisan continuing resolution, one that does aim us for a balanced budget but does not do damage to Medicare and education.

THE BUDGET IMPASSE

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

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, I rise to attempt to put the budget impasse in an historical, economic, and constitutional context.

The big secret in Washington that Republicans won't acknowledge and Democrats won't admit is that the rhetoric of the parties doesn't fit the circumstance. The change in course that is underway in Congress is neither as revolutionary as conservative leaders suggest nor as radical as the liberals would have it. It is an effort to move the ship of state gradually from a slightly left-of-center to slightly right-of-center direction.

The macro-economic goal is to achieve a balanced budget in 7 years with 3 percent a year increases in Federal spending. A year ago consensus economic models pointed to a 3.1 to 3.2 percent inflation over this time period. More recently inflation projections have been revised downward, with Lester Thurow of M.I.T. startling the economic community with the declaration that inflation is dead. Whether or not Thurow's assertion as Mark Twain might quip is premature, the new Congress has put in place a program that in outline is intended to represent an inflation adjusted freeze on spending. Rather than radical, such an approach is common-sense; rather than revolutionary, it is revolution-avoiding.

The question that remains in the executive-legislative dialog of the month is whether enough good will can be marshalled or enough confrontational bluff avoided to allow politicians who feed off each other to advance the common good. In this context, the Republican case to stick with firm macro-constraints would appear compelling, but flexibility to accommodate certain executive branch requested changes in priorities can credibly be considered. As long as the foundations and walls of the new programmatic discipline follow the balanced budget blueprint of Congress, the living-room furniture in the new house of Government can be rearranged. The Republicans aren't infallible; the Democrats have no monopoly on compassion.

While the President has assiduously made political points with program constituencies, it is impressive to note how few issues he appears committed. Part of the President's lack of resolve may be due to the fact that he understands deficit reduction will reflect well on his Presidency, part may be due to the fact that in our constitutional system the Congress is principally delegated purse-string authority. The first and second estates of Government may be co-equal, but not in all areas. While the executive has primacy in foreign policy, decisions on taxing and spending are disproportionately the responsibility of the legislature.

Nevertheless, the Presidency is always more powerful than the President and however strong or weak one assesses the current occupant of the White House, legislators should be cautioned to recognize the power of the veto and the authority of the bulliest pulpit in the world.

Likewise, the President should be cautioned not to be so intent on trying to establish a macho image—what the press has reported as a White House effort to show that the President stands for something—that accommodation with Congress becomes impossible.

What the public must keep in mind in the budget showdown is that the current process is so ad hoc. Washington has no relevant modern day experience in dealing with a divided Government in which the executive branch is