

Official Conduct on the floor of the House?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman is correct and the Chair will read from page 526 of the House Rules manual under rule number XIV:

Members should refrain from references in debate to the official conduct of other Members where such conduct is not under consideration in the House by way of a report of the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct or a question of privilege of the House.

The gentleman is correct.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, I have a parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will state it.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, what in the rules prevents a Member of this House from discussing an action that has taken place on the House floor? The gentleman from Texas [Mr. DOGGETT] is not discussing what is occurring in the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct. The gentleman is discussing what is happening on the House Floor.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The discussion of the pendency of matters before the Standards committee is not in order.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, is the Chair suggesting that it is out of order to discuss a matter which occurred on the House floor? Because that is the action to which the gentleman's remarks were referring.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Wisconsin is placing words in the Chair's mouth. That was not the Chair's response. The response was that the statements that the gentleman from Texas was making referring to matters currently before the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct are not in order.

All the Chair is stating at this point is that for further purposes of discussion this evening, if a point of order is raised, there should be no further such discussion as the gentleman from Texas raised.

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, I have a parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will state it.

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, then is it the ruling of the Chair that the resolution that the House just voted to table on the floor of this House concerning the desire for a report from the committee, the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, is improper and cannot be discussed even during special orders?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair is simply stating that in response to the parliamentary inquiry from the gentleman from Pennsylvania, that the references that the gentleman from Texas made in discussing that resolution went beyond reciting its consideration. That is the very limited extent of the Chair's response.

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, so, the Chair is not saying that the resolution itself, which I read from throughout the course of my remarks, would not be the proper subject of debate here in the course of special orders?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The resolution was considered as a question of the privileges of the House—

Mr. DOGGETT. And so it is a proper subject.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. And is no longer at this time under consideration by the House, based on the action of the House previously today.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, I have a further parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will state it.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, is the gentleman from Texas entitled to discuss action which took place on the House floor? Is there any action that takes place on the House floor that any Member of this House is not allowed to refer to?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Would the gentleman from Wisconsin begin again, the Chair was preoccupied looking up the rule in the manual.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, I am simply asking if the gentleman from Texas is within the rules of the House if he continues to discuss a matter which occurred on the House Floor.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will not issue anticipatory rulings. The Chair simply responded to the parliamentary inquiry from the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

The 5 minutes of the gentleman from Texas having expired, there is no longer anything before the Chair to consider, and the Chair will not and cannot issue anticipatory rulings.

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, I have a further parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will state it.

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, because the Chair has ruled, if I understand it, in response to the parliamentary inquiry that certain remarks would not conform with the rules of the Chair, and since all of my remarks centered on reading a privileged resolution that the House had just tabled, is it the ruling of the Chair that because the resolution was tabled, it is not proper for consideration here since it dealt with the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct and pending business?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Only to the extent that the gentleman's remarks went beyond that.

Mr. DOGGETT. So, reading the resolution would be within the rules of the House?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The resolution has, in fact been tabled—

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, I am well aware of the fact that it has been tabled. That is what I have been talking about the last 5 minutes. My inquiry, Mr. Speaker, is whether or not a discussion of the action in tabling that resolution, and my reading of the resolution that was tabled, would be within the rules of the House, because your previous response to the parliamentary inquiry of the gentleman from Pennsylvania suggests otherwise.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The content of the resolution is not the proper

subject for debate in this House when it is no longer pending, and it is no longer pending.

Mr. HOKE. Mr. Speaker, I have a parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will state it.

Mr. HOKE. Mr. Speaker, is it proper to read verbatim, without any commentary whatsoever, a resolution which has been tabled by the House, in a special order after regular business has ended?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Not if the text of the resolution itself involves official conduct.

Mr. HOKE. So, Mr. Speaker, reading the text verbatim of a resolution which has been tabled pertaining to a matter before the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct is, in fact, out of order after it has been tabled?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman is correct.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, I have a further parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will state it.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, the Chair is not, however, ruling that it is out of order for any Member of this House to address any action taken by the House on this floor, is the Chair?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair is making no global rulings.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, I think what the Chair is saying is that the gentleman can proceed if he is not discussing the committee, but discussing floor action.

THE BALANCED BUDGET ACT: A HISTORIC VOTE

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

Mr. MARTINI. Mr. Speaker, this afternoon, in listening to the closing debate by our very able chairman of the Committee on the Budget, I was struck by his comments acknowledging the many people who have been working for so many years to enact or to present to this floor for a vote, finally, a Balanced Budget Act.

In listening to Chairman KASICH's comments, it struck me at this very moment how rare of an honor it is indeed for me to be here today to have cast a vote on such a historic piece of legislation. In fact, it is this very legislation which embodies the very principles that I campaigned on just 12 months ago.

The Balanced Budget Act of 1995 represents the essence of what I believe in: a fiscally sound and responsible Federal Government that passes on a better America to its future generations. This truly for me is a defining moment in our Nation's history.

The Balanced Budget Act is not a smoke-and-mirrors sham in an attempt to fool the electorate. This budget is a real, honest plan that offers the people we serve the first balanced budget in a

quarter of a century. This bill is, in my opinion, right for New Jersey, but more importantly, right for America.

Throughout the debate leading up to today's historic vote we have witnessed a debate between two competing visions. On the one side are the advocates of the status quo, and on the other a group of legislators committed to offering real solutions to real problems.

Sadly, the advocates of the status quo have only been able to offer us echoes of the very sentiments that put our country in the red to begin with. Their answers to the very real questions and problems we are faced with are disappointingly and simply more of the same.

They believe that more spending, more taxes, and more debt are the answer to our budget ills. Most regrettably, during this debate the supporters of the status quo have fueled the fires of skepticism and despair, choosing to resort to demagoguery and doomsday scenarios at a time when our constituents deserve more.

As we stand on the threshold of truly monumental reform, it is only natural to experience a certain amount of anxiety about what comes next. But real leadership demands, in my opinion, that the response to that anxiety be hard work and commitment, not homage to the failed policies of the past.

Mr. Speaker, today we delivered where others have failed. Only in 1992, our non-President and then-candidate promised a balanced budget, the end of welfare as we know it, and a middle-class tax cut. We have been denied every one of these by the President and his Congress.

Today, we represent the very opposite. Today we will balance, and did balance, the budget for the sake of our children and their future. We have offered real, credible welfare reform and we will deliver a middle-class tax cut.

In short, today in passing the Balanced Budget Act of 1995, we are offering the President, by signing this bill, the opportunity to fulfill his major campaign pledges in one fell swoop. And sadly, again, he appears once more to be poised to reject his own campaign promises.

Finally, I would like to comment for a moment about the subject of Medicare. Unquestionably, in my opinion, the politics of this issue were best explained in the November 16 edition of the Washington Post editorial when it said the following: "The Democrats, led by the President, choose instead to present themselves as Medicare's great protectors. They have shamelessly used the issue, demagogued on it, because they think that's where the votes are and the way to derail the Republican plans generally."

Sadly, I must agree with those comments. In defense of the status quo, we have seen only politics and not leadership.

Mr. Speaker, in the past several weeks I visited the veterans in my dis-

trict and over that time I have been repeatedly reminded of how impressed I am each time with their courage in the face of real adversity and dangerous crises as those that they have faced.

They were successful in their battles and kept America safe from a dangerous world, but history has shown us that great civilizations fall victims to the crisis from within just as often as they fall prey to the threats from without. The threats from within might not be tangible or have a face or a name readily associated with them, but they do, in fact, exist.

Mr. Speaker, the deficit is just such a threat. Through it may not be apparent to Americans in their everyday lives, the effects of the deficit spending and out-of-control growth in the Federal Government pose a real, real danger for America. We in Congress are charged with the duty of dealing with these problems, which is what the debate was about today.

Mr. Speaker, it is not difficult to figure out what the people want and deserve. They do not want us to blink. They want us to go forward. They do want us to pass along to their children a future filled with prosperity and hope, not debt and despair.

Mr. Speaker, I was pleased and humbled to be a part of this historic vote today, after only 11 months ago coming to this House.

BUDGET RECONCILIATION

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

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, the budget bill we just passed gives a hand and a handout to the well-connected and well-off and uses a fist and brute force against the poor and many of those who work in America.

It provides for drastic and extreme changes in the lives of our citizens, and it does so through a process that was not open—a process that evolved in the dark shadows of smoke-filled, back rooms.

The Republicans would have us accept that Secret Report so that they can glide to a balanced budget in 7 years—But, "to balance" means "to equalize". And, we will not equalize, when we give a \$245 billion tax break to the wealthy while Student loans are cut, nutrition and child care are compromised, farm programs are thrown out the window, spending for needed housing programs is reduced, and Medicare and Medicaid are slashed.

We can and we should balance the budget. But, we do not need a budget that is a war without bullets.

The issue is not about balancing the budget—it is about balancing our priorities.

I voted for a 7-year balanced budget plan offered in the coalition alternative budget. But, as we glide towards a balanced budget, we should not slide through the cracks and crevices of Con-

gress, creating a clandestine, trillion dollar spending package that helps the rich among us and hurts the rest among us.

All Americans are created equal. We must not forget that fundamental premise of our Government as we shape a basic budget for the United States.

Let's give a hand to all Americans, a handout to those who need it and use a fist on real enemies. Americans who earn \$28,000 dollars or less a year are no different than those who earn \$100,000 dollars a year.

Why can't we balance the budget by giving some tax relief to the low earners and taking back some tax relief from the high earners. That is what balancing means.

Why can't we balance the budget by helping our senior citizens, who have labored a lifetime, instead of helping those who already have money to get more money—that is what balancing means.

The Republicans have established in this Congress—a record that supports the wealthy and neglects those most in need.

This budget plan—a plan that takes from the poor and gives to the rich will succeed, if we do nothing.

They want to spend money on the wealthy and call it an investment, while taking money from school children, pregnant women, infants, farmers, the poor, students and seniors and call it savings.

Our priorities seem out of order.

They have gone too far in cutting school lunches—They have gone too far in shutting off heating assistance for senior citizens—They have gone too far in eliminating scholarships and in cutting loans for college students—They have gone too far in eliminating summer jobs—and, they have gone too far in denying baby formula to infants.

Huddled beneath the dim street lamps, in the counties and towns and cities of this state, and across the Nation, are people who are outside.

They are the sick, the frail, the disabled, the poor, the weak, the old, our children—the least among us. This Budget Reconciliation Bill will keep them on the outside. And, toiling on the farms and in the factories and in small and medium sized businesses, are the people who are also outside—outside of the bounty of this Nation, despite their hard work. This Budget Reconciliation Bill will keep them on the outside.

I urge my colleagues both Democrats and Republicans who want to give a hand to the majority of our citizens—to the poor and to average, hard-working, taxpaying Americans—and who want to find a fist to crush this unrevealed conference report for a select few—I urge you to join me in supporting the President's veto of this report.

This Reconciliation Bill is a war without bullets because—while there are no weapons nor bloodshed—it does the same kind of harm to the lives of millions of Americans.