

principles wherein all areas of Government are affected proportionally.

Our children are the future. Our Government must continue to provide a safety net for mothers and children who are least able to provide for themselves. Programs such as child nutrition and Head Start are essential to our national interest. We must also invest in education and job training so that our Nation will be able to effectively compete in the global marketplace.

We must also honor our commitment to the elderly. They have the right to live in this country and enjoy the security and comfort of retirement without the fear of Government reducing their benefits to the point they must sell all of their assets to qualify for governmental assistance.

We can achieve a balanced budget without devastating cuts in Medicaid, Medicare, education, and without raising taxes on working families.

Therefore I urge my colleagues to move responsibly and pass the budget.

EPA APPROPRIATIONS CONFERENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE] is recognized during morning business for 4 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, this week, we will be addressing the remaining appropriations conference reports, including the VA-HUD appropriations conference report which provides funding for the Environmental Protection Agency.

Unfortunately, our environmental laws have taken blow after blow in the 104th Congress as bills spiked with antienvironmental measures pass the House floor, both out in the open as in the Clean Water Act reauthorization or through more mischievous measures, as through appropriation and budget bills like the VA-HUD conference report that we will be voting on this week, most likely tomorrow.

No other Government agency is facing the kind of cuts that are included in this bill for the EPA.

The bill cuts funding for the EPA to set and enforce environmental and public health standards for air pollution, pesticides, and clean and safe water by 17 percent from what the President proposed.

Hazardous waste site cleanup is being cut by 25 percent, slowing efforts to make the Superfund Program faster, fairer, and more efficient.

And EPA's enforcement funding is being hit even harder, with a 27-percent cut in enforcement of all environmental programs.

On top of all the direct cuts to EPA's budget, this bill cuts by 30 percent funds that go straight to the States to help keep raw sewage off beaches and out of waterways.

And State loan funds for use in protecting community drinking water na-

tionwide are reduced by 45 percent in this bill.

Restricting the EPA's ability to implement environmental protection programs and reducing funding to the States, in my opinion, is nothing less than an unfunded mandate on the States to maintain environmental quality.

In the majority of cases where adequate Federal funds are not made available, State funding just is not there.

This means that a virtual environmental protection vacuum will be created by this bill, where polluters get off scot free at the expense of environmental quality, and human safety and health.

One must ask why funding for environmental protection is being targeted or why after three votes to remove restrictive riders from the VA-HUD appropriations bill, the majority of the riders were simply moved to report language and several riders still remain as actual legislative language in the bill.

For example, incorporated in this bill is a rider that prevents EPA from stopping dumping of potentially harmful fill into wetlands.

EPA is by no means overly zealous in its use of this authority over wetlands, and only 11 times in the history of the wetlands program has it stepped in to veto this type of dumping.

Even in New Jersey, a State with one of the most stringent wetlands programs in the country, 94 percent of all wetlands permit applications are approved. So why is it necessary to put a rider in this bill prohibiting the EPA from protecting wetlands?

Another measure that does not belong in this bill is the prohibition of EPA's authority to add hazardous waste sites to the national priority list under Superfund.

The Superfund listing process is strictly scientific now.

There are those in this Congress, however, who seem determined to politicize the process by placing all sorts of restrictions on listing Superfund sites.

My committee, the Committee on Commerce, is now reviewing the Superfund Program, and I maintain the legislative process should simply be allowed to run its course.

If this conference report is passed in its current form, the EPA's hands will be tied and the quality of the air we breathe and the water we drink will suffer dramatically.

I urge my colleagues to oppose this bill and send it back to conference in order to restore the EPA's ability to effectively protect the health and safety of our environment and our constituents.

Essentially, if we send the bill back to conference again, those who represent the House and the Senate can get together and come up with a better bill that does not cut enforcement for environmental protection as much, that provides sufficient funding to the

States so that they can continue to maintain a quality environment. This is what we should be doing in this Congress instead of passing this bill.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12, rule 1, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m.

Accordingly (at 1 o'clock and 25 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 at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

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

As we gain more knowledge about the workings of our world, we pray, gracious God, that we will sense more fully the wonder and the awe and the marvel that are about us and which have been provided by Your creative hand. May we live each day with a reverence for the miracles that are before us, with an appreciation of the mysteries of the universe and with a greater awareness of the ambiguities of the road ahead. Give us pause to reflect on Your majesty, the power of Your love, and the marvelous occasions we have to serve You and the people of the land. In Your name, we pray. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

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

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. WELLER] come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. WELLER 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.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
Washington, DC, November 28, 1995.

Hon. NEWT GINGRICH,
Speaker, House of Representatives, Washington,
DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to section 2702(a)(1)(B)(vi) of Public Law 101-509, I hereby appoint as a member of the Advisory Committee on the Records of Congress the following person: Roger Davidson, 3510 Edmunds Street, NW, Washington, DC.

With warm regards,
ROBIN H. CARLE, Clerk.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair desires to announce that pursuant to clause 4 of rule I, the Speaker signed the following enrolled bills on Monday, November 20, 1995:

S. 440, to amend title 23, United States Code, to provide for the designation of the National Highway System, and for other purposes; and

S. 1328, to amend the commencement dates of certain temporary Federal judgeships.

TIME TO BALANCE THE BUDGET

(Mr. WELLER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, as one of the Republican freshmen, one of the new Members of this body, I came here with a commitment to change how Washington works. I now as a privilege of serving as a Member of the House carry a voting card, a piece of plastic with which to record my vote.

For the last 26 years, Members of the House have used this card and made it the world's most expensive credit card, running up a \$4.9 trillion debt. We think about our own families, when someone runs up a massive credit card debt, what that means and how it needs to be paid off.

I have with me a bag full of play money, but this bag represents the \$19,000 that every Illinois citizen, that very American citizen currently owes as their share of the national debt. If we had to pay off the national debt today, every American citizen would have to write a check for \$19,000.

It is time to change how Washington works, to balance the budget. The President has now agreed with the Congress that we should do it in 10 years.

Republicans have a plan to balance the budget in 7 years by reforming welfare, strengthening Medicare and providing tax relief to working families, but the President has failed to show us his plan. Now he is going to leave the country for 6 days. All he issues is a press release saying he would like to do it in 7 years.

Mr. President, I think it is time, before you leave the country for 6 days, when we need to provide a balanced budget by December 15, that you show us the specifics. Show us, Mr. President, if you do not like our plan to balance the budget, how you would do it. We need to see the fine print.

REPUBLICAN TAX PLAN IS UNFAIR

(Mr. PALLONE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I have been very critical of the Republican budget plan because I believe that it cuts Medicare in order to provide major tax breaks primarily for wealthy Americans. This of course is disputed by some of the Republican leaders, most notably the gentleman from Texas [Mr. ARCHER], who is the chairman of the Republican, or in this case, the House Committee on Ways and Means, the tax-cutting committee.

The New York Times last week put out an editorial based on the Treasury Department's figures. Basically the Treasury Department shows that in fact the tax breaks are primarily for the wealthy in this Republican bill.

It says in the New York Times editorial that the Treasury estimated that the richest 1 percent would rake in almost twice as much, or 17 percent of the tax cut under the bill. Indeed, under the Republican bill the poorest 20 percent of families, taken as a group, would pay higher taxes as a percentage of their income. The Treasury figures are solid evidence that the Republican tax cut is heavily weighted toward the rich.

As we proceed over the next 2 weeks in this budget battle, in negotiating a compromise, I am very hopeful that we will see a lot of money brought back into Medicare, to make sure that the Medicare Program is viable, and that we cut back on these tax breaks for wealthy Americans. It is not fair to cut Medicare and essentially destroy it at the expense of the average American in order to finance tax breaks primarily for those wealthier members among us.

PRESIDENT SHOULD SIGN BALANCED BUDGET ACT

(Mr. LEWIS of Kentucky asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. LEWIS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, if the President is honestly looking for a plan that balances the budget in 7 years, uses legitimate numbers, and protects his priorities, he need look no further than the Republican Balanced Budget Act. Let us consider some of the areas the President says he has problems with our bill.

Medicare—our plan increases Medicare spending every year and ensures Medicare's solvency through at least 2010. There are no cuts.

Education—there are no education cuts in the Republican bill. The dollar volume of student loans increases 50 percent during the next 7 years. More student loans will be available next year than ever before.

The environment—not a single environmental protection program is touched in the Republican Balanced Budget Act. There are no environmental cuts in the Republican bill.

Mr. Speaker, the Republican Balance Budget Act is a good bill. It balances the budget while preserving the American people's priorities. The President should sign this bill.

SAYING NO TO GROUND TROOPS IN BOSNIA

(Mr. TRAFICANT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, I oppose sending ground troops to Bosnia. All military experts agree that Bosnia is not a military threat to the United States. Also, they agree that Europe has more than enough military capability to handle the peacekeeping problems in Bosnia.

But there is another argument that keeps popping up, and that is that we must protect the integrity of NATO. My colleagues, NATO was created to protect Europe from Soviet invasion. I say it is time that America stop subsidizing Europe's protection. It is time to disband NATO, let them create their own military alliance that they can support.

Let Congress not forget, in the 1960's the Johnson administration asked Europe to help us in Vietnam. Europe said, "It's too costly. There's too much killing. It's your way, America."

I say, look, we have all come to know him as Uncle Sam. Now we are letting him be treated like Uncle Sucker. They have enough money. They have enough military capability. This is in Europe's backyard. Let them send their troops to the front. We can provide support with air strikes, with training, with advisers, but not with ground troops.

COLONIAL BEACH VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT 100TH ANNIVERSARY

(Mr. BLILEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BLILEY. Mr. Speaker, the Colonial Beach Volunteer Fire Department got its start in March 1884, with a resolution passed at the 35th meeting of the town council, promising cooperation with property owners in raising funds to purchase a fire extinguishing apparatus to be operated by a volunteer fire company. A committee was appointed in October 1895, to ascertain the cost and to determine how much money interested citizens would contribute toward its purchase.

A request was received in July 1896, from the Howe Pump and Engine Company of Indianapolis, IN, to demonstrate a piece of fire apparatus in Colonial Beach, VA. The apparatus was to be drawn by a team of two horses, and would be operated by eight men, four on each side of the pump by cantilever action. It would be capable of dispensing 60 gallons of water per minute and was equipped with 500 feet of 2¼ inch