



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 104th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 141

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 1995

No. 29

House of Representatives

The House met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore [Mr. DICKEY].

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communications from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,

February 14, 1995.

I hereby designate the Honorable JAY DICK-
EY to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NEWT GINGRICH,

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING BUSINESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 1995, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 30 minutes and each Member except the majority and minority leaders limited to 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. NORWOOD] for 5 minutes.

IRS HOLDING UP REFUNDS OF SOME WHO FILE TAX RETURNS ELECTRONICALLY

Mr. NORWOOD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the people the administration has targeted for help through the minimum wage. These people need help today because of the administration. I rise today in support of hardworking Americans everywhere who are being unjustly punished by the IRS.

The IRS encourages people to file electronically. It saves time, paper, and mailing costs. Many Americans

have utilized this service because it means they can get their refunds much faster. Companies that prepare taxes will make refund anticipation loans to people who file electronically. It is a simple way for hardworking people to get money owed them by our Government fast—and these people depend on that refund check.

But in steps the IRS. The IRS has begun holding the refunds of those people who are filing electronically for the earned income tax credits. Our information is that the IRS is holding as many as 95 percent of those electronic filers seeking the earned income tax credit, in a supposed effort to cut down on fraud. These are people who do not make a lot of money and need those refund checks to get by. Their refunds are being held up to 2 months. They are unable to get refund loans from tax preparers because of the delay caused by the IRS. The IRS is creating a terrible problem for people who can afford it the least.

Mr. Speaker, we are just beginning to learn the consequences of the IRS' irresponsible actions. My office has learned of instances where people have been evicted from their homes because they were expecting a refund check that has yet to come. The other side has spent a lot of time telling us of the plight of the low-income worker. Well, right now, there are low-income workers depending on the Clinton administration, depending on a check from the IRS to pay for food or rent or heat on this cold February morning—a check that the IRS is holding up.

We live in an age where we depend on ever-expanding information technologies. In tax-filing, we encourage taxpayers to file electronically. We encourage people to use the information super highway. The Clinton administration has promoted the use of the information super highway. The Vice President has championed this as a step toward reinventing Government.

Well, Mr. Vice President, I hope you are paying attention, because some of America's hardest working low-income workers have stepped out onto the information super highway, and have gotten run over by the IRS.

Mr. Speaker, we all know that the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. TRAFICANT] has documented the abuses of the IRS. This is just one further example. I am willing to consider a flat tax if for no other reason than it would eliminate most all of the need for having an IRS. I call on the IRS to immediately release the refunds due those hard-working people who filed electronically and to act more responsibly in the future. To the IRS, I say this, "You may be responsible for collecting taxes from the people, but that does not mean you are not responsible to the people."

WE NEED COPS, NOT CONSULTANTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. STUPAK] for 4 minutes.

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, yesterday we began the debate and amendment process on H.R. 728, the crime bill, the Republican crime bill. Those of us who opposed 728 believe all it is is one huge block grant proposal to cut and gut the Clinton program.

Four months into this very successful program of putting police on the streets, Republicans want to gut the program for a block grant.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday I took to this well, and I described the block grant program as "pork of Christmas past." We learned from the abuses in the past, in the late 1960's and early 1970's, and because of the abuses in law enforcement block grant proposals in the bill, we put in amendments that said block grant money cannot be used for tanks, armored personnel carriers, fixed-wing

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



Printed on recycled paper containing 100% post consumer waste

H1691

aircraft, limousines, real estate, and yachts.

Well, we just started to debate yesterday and, guess what, we got "pork of Christmas present."

The gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. WATT] wanted to make sure that law enforcement block grant proceeds would not go to be used to build roads. His amendment says to improve public safety, that it not be interpreted to use any funds appropriated under this title for the construction or improvement of highways, streets, and roads. We are trying to stop past abuses.

Guess what? The amendment failed. The Republicans want to use block grant money for law enforcement for anything they want. I looked into what the Speaker said 8 months ago: If we have to choose between paying for a direct purpose such as building prisons, I can defend that. What I cannot defend is sending a blank check for local politicians across the country for them to decide how to spend it.

So we are going to give them money for roads and call it law enforcement. That is what we did yesterday. Past abuses that we found: One-third of every dollar went to consultants, not for law enforcement. In a \$10 billion crime bill for block grants, that is \$3.3 billion; 367,000 less cops will take the streets if this proposal goes through.

We want cops, not consultants. We want what Mr. GINGRICH said 8 months ago to hold up today and not use it so local politicians can use it for whatever they want. Eight months ago, or 8 hours into the debate, Republicans were already starting to use money to build roads instead of putting cops on the street.

Now, as we all know the old saying, roads, The road to—is paved with good intentions.

We do not need good intentions. We need cops on the street where they belong. We want cops to walk the beat, we want cops, we don't want consultants. We want cops, we do not want pork. We want cops, we do not want good intentions.

Today those who say they support law enforcement will have the opportunity. Mr. SCHUMER and Mr. CONYERS will offer an amendment that says the 100,000 cops program stays as it is.

You will have a chance to redeem your ways, you will have a chance to change and put police officers on the street, not to build streets and roads.

So I hope that my colleagues today on the Schumer-Conyers amendment will vote "yes" to keep 100,000 cops in H.R. 728. Support law enforcement, support the Clinton cops program. H.R. 728, as written, is opposed by all the major police organizations: The National Association of Police Organizations, the Fraternal Order of Police, the International Brotherhood of Police Officers, the Major Cities Chiefs, the National Association of Police Executives, the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives, National Troopers Coalition, Police

Executive Research Forum, the Police Management Association, Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association, National Black Police Association, National Sheriffs Association, and the Police Foundation.

We are saying, leave the 100,000 cops program alone. Support the Schumer-Conyers amendment.

IS WASHINGTON OMNIPOTENT? I DOUBT IT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas [Mr. JOHNSON] for 2 minutes.

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I hate to see comments like we just heard. Is Washington omnipotent? I doubt it.

I would like to quote what the administration thinks of our Governors' and mayors' ability to fight crime in their own States and cities.

The Justice Department said, "The proposed block grant will be dissipated by applying the funds to unwise and frivolous expenditures, with the result that their impact was scattershot, short-term, and diluted."

They continue by saying, "Local officials would be free to engage in 100 percent federally funded 'spending spree,' with no guidance as to how these funds should be spent."

Do our local officials need guidance from Washington, DC? I do not think so. A Member of this body said that grants would be just like "throwing dollars down a rat hole." Is he calling our State and local governments rat holes? I do not think they are.

Is this not the pot calling the kettle black?

A Federal Government that has accumulated a \$5 trillion debt is saying that our State and local government officials will go on a spending spree.

Well, I do not think Americans want, need, or deserve control from Washington, DC. Unlike some of our Washington crowd, we must have faith in our Governors, our mayors, our police chiefs and every citizen of this country; that they, not some Washington bureaucrat, know best how to fight crime in America.

LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT BLOCK GRANTS, H.R. 728

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 1995, the gentlewoman from North Carolina [Mrs. CLAYTON] is recognized during morning business for 4 minutes.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, last Congress we passed legislation to put 100,000 police on the streets. Grants have already been awarded to 17,000 communities across the United States, including several in my State of North Carolina. At least half of the police departments throughout the country have applied for these community policing grants. This bill will take a giant step back in time.

I believe we are at a dangerous point in history. We are placing greater emphasis on putting people away, than we are on protecting and preserving our neighborhoods. For years, it has been well recognized that punishment alone is not enough to deter crime. The classic case of public hangings of pick pockets, while others were in the crowd picking pockets, should not be lost in this debate. Prevention has a place in eliminating crime. Policing has a place in deterring criminal activity. More jails is the last place we should look to as a way of ridding our streets of crime and steering our young people in the right direction.

The police program we passed is designed to help stem the rising tide of crime and to make our streets safe again. Last year's crime bill made sure that the resources would be used for more police and police related activities, such as new technology and overtime pay. The language of this bill, which allows for block grants, would broaden the use of the funds. That broader use will effectively dilute resources for community policing and would allow funds to be used for such things as street lights and disaster preparation. Those are important uses, but those uses are not as important as more police.

There is absolutely no requirement in H.R. 728 that the funds authorized must be used for police. Last year's bill gave sufficient flexibility to the State and local governments, while insuring that the police would be hired to patrol our streets. H.R. 728 provides no such guarantees. In addition, any block grant funds that might be used for police under this bill, may well be threatened by the budget ax under the mandate of a balanced budget constitutional amendment. Block grants funds are far more vulnerable to such a result.

We may not have any new police on the streets, if this bill passes. More importantly, under block grant funding, the critical prevention programs we passed last year are at risk. Over the next 5 years, under last year's bill, my State of North Carolina would receive millions of dollars in funds to help prevent violence against women; \$27 million would have gone for police, prosecutors, and victims services. And \$9 million would have gone to grants for shelters for battered women and their children. There is doubt that those funds will be available under this bill.

Under last year's bill, North Carolina would have received \$6 million to treat some 5,400 drug addicted prisoners, housed in our prisons. We would have received \$21 million, over the next 5 years, for after school and in-school safe heavens for our children. All of those funds will be in doubt, with passage of this bill. We would have received \$39 million in direct grants for a variety of local programs for education and jobs programs. And, we would have