

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

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

PRIORITIZING APPROPRIATION MEASURES

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

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Mr. Speaker, I take this time to really question what we are doing today by bringing up legislative appropriations.

Mr. Speaker, when I was home this weekend, people were going crazy saying, what do you mean there is going to be a train wreck? There is going to be a huge train wreck and all sorts of people who are Federal employees may be asked to be furloughed forever, who knows for how long; to go without pay, and benefits could be cut off. We are going to look so silly, because never has Congress, in the entire history I remember, been so late in dealing with the 13 funding bills that are absolutely essential. Here we are, it is September, the money runs out September 30, and not one bill has been passed.

Mr. Speaker, the shocker is, guess who is not going to be hurt by this train wreck? Us. This is the imperial Congress in spades, and this is wrong. Because the only bill of those 13 bills ready for action today and ready to move to the President's desk is the legislative appropriations.

Think how that looks to the American people, that while we could not get around to doing the other 12 bills, and while we are later doing these bills than any other Congress in history, and that this country may look very, very silly as we go through all of these throes of shutting down Government and all of the costly additions that we know that costs. I had the Government Accounting Office do a study on how much that cost the last time we did it, and we did it just for a few days. Well, it ended up costing almost a half a billion dollars. For a country with the kind of debt we have, that is a stupid way to spend money.

So here we are, Mr. Speaker, a Congress who has not gotten its work done on time, who has not done any of the 13 bills, but today, we are going to take up our pay, our staff's pay, and the pay of the other body, because heaven forbid, we would not want to be hurt by this train wreck that is coming. This is the way we untie ourselves from the rail.

Now, the prior gentleman gave a very good speech down in the well talking about the gift ban. That is another reason that I think that we are taking this up with such haste today, because we do not want to deal with the issues around the gift ban. We have dealt with them before, we know what they are,

this House has passed them before. But if we can hurry this thing through as the very first thing that is done in this body, just as people are getting off planes and coming back, they will not realize that they have just exempted themselves from the act that is going to fall on folks, and that we do not have to deal with the ugly issues because people are not informed and will not know to vote no on the previous question and so forth.

Mr. Speaker, the people in my district came to the rally yesterday because I introduced a bill saying, I want to change the rules of the House so that we never pass the funding for the House and the Senate until we have passed the funding for every other branch of Government. This running up and saying, exempt us, keep us out of the way, is wrong, and we ought to change that rule.

Now, I know that putting this resolution in today is not going to work, because you already have it on the schedule and here it is, boom, boom, gone, over. But we really have to say that in an era where the people were promised reform, this was going to be a different Congress and so forth, we look like the most imperial of the imperial Congresses.

In my district there are many, many people who work for the Federal Government, and I think after the Oklahoma bombing, many Americans realize, these people look just like their neighbors. We should stop calling them bureaucrats and curl our lip as we do it. These are families that live in our communities that are trying to make ends meet. As I introduced this at a rally, they all said yes. They could not believe that we would have the audacity to take ourselves out of this train wreck and to do it as the first order of business when we came back.

They also went on to ask all sorts of questions which I could not answer, were they going to be impacted, what about their children in school, what about their mortgage payment, how long were they going to be furloughed, would they get back pay? And to all of those questions I had to say, "You know, I do not know, because Congress has not finished its work on any of the 13 bills. But the good news is, today we will have finished work on our pay."

That did not go over well. They like my new rule. I cannot get it passed at this late date. I just cannot believe the brazenness of our doing this first, taking care of ourselves first. I hope every Member of this body thinks about how this is going to look, if we rush in here after the break, and the first thing we make sure of is that we take care of ourselves, and then we go on to let everybody else dangle out there in all of this anxiety of which agencies will be chopped, which ones will not, who will be on furlough, when will people be called back.

Think of what we would say if another country's parliament did this. Think of what we would say if we

watched France or Germany shut down because they could not act. Well, that is what they are going to say about us.

I certainly hope we do not do this today. I urge Members to get on the resolution. But, better yet, vote "no" today, and let us get on with dealing with the rest of the business before we put ourselves first. That is not reform, that is the same old business, only even worse. I have never seen that happen before.

Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing a resolution that requires Congress to consider and pass all other appropriations before voting on the legislative branch appropriations.

This year Congress has not finished any of the 13 appropriations bills. Never has Congress been this derelict. My bill is needed to force Congress to act responsibly rather than playing politics by threatening to shut down the Government. It will prevent what has been called the train wreck.

If Congress isn't tied to the tracks, then they are much freer to play fast and loose with everyone else's lives.

It is outrageous that the first appropriations bill to pass is funding for Congress. The message this sends to every household in America is that we will take care of ourselves but everyone else is nonessential.

The imperial Congress is alive and well. If you thought the Republicans were reformers, you're wrong. This shouldn't surprise most Americans. It is always the little guy who gets the raw end of the deal when Congress plays politics.

Shutting down the Federal Government wastes money. In 1991 the General Accounting Office estimated that as much as \$607.3 million was wasted during the 3-day 1990 Columbus Day shutdown. In my district a shutdown will cost \$10 to \$15 million a day.

The rest of the world will laugh. Imagine what Americans would say if another country shut down their government because their parliament failed to pass funding bills.

Oklahoma City showed us our neighbors are Federal workers trying to do the best job possible. Playing politics with their lives while exempting Congress and their staff from any pain is the most demoralizing act imaginable.

Stop the book tours and get to work on the huge backlog of appropriations bills. And don't pay yourselves until you do. That's what my bill proposes. Please back it.

A MESSAGE FROM CONSTITUENTS

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

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. Mr. Speaker, I also was home this weekend and also for the entire month of August, and being home for the entire month of August, it really hit me about what is wrong with Washington, DC. There is such a disconnect between the inside-the-beltway-mentality and out-side-the-beltway-mentality that I found it absolutely staggering.

No sooner had I left Washington, DC, and touched down in my district than I started hearing day in and day out that people in my district and, in fact, my

friends and colleagues from across America, continue to report that Americans want us to move and act on the mandate that was handed to us on November 8, 1994, and that mandate is to balance the budget, to cut taxes, to cut spending, to cut regulations, to cut out bureaucracies, and make sweeping changes that will reform the welfare state and change the welfare state, where we stop encouraging reckless behavior and we start encouraging productivity and hard work.

I held 30 townhall meetings and had over 100 other meetings and countless TV and radio talk shows. Again, the clear message, the resounding message that I heard time and time again, was make something happen in Washington.

Mr. Speaker, up here when you are in Washington, if you talk about just cutting the increase of spending on a Federal program, they call you a radical. They say that it is going to have a devastating impact; that you are out of touch with America.

Let me tell you something: You ain't out of touch with America when you talk about radically downsizing the Federal Government. You are out of touch with lobbyists, you are out of touch with special interest groups, you are out of touch with bureaucrats, and you are out of touch with a national press corps that still does not get it, that still believes that the unprecedented congressional landslide on November 8, 1994, was a fluke, and somehow it is just going to go away.

Let me tell you something: It ain't going away. It is here to stay. Americans do not trust the Federal Government to micromanage every single part of their lives.

One year ago President Clinton sent Congress home, and when they came back, they brought in the message, "Your health care reform bill is dead on arrival. Americans do not want socialized medicine."

Well, let me tell you something: We came home to our districts this time, and the American people came to us, and they are not saying that you are moving too fast; they are saying that you are not moving fast enough. They say make something happen.

Now, we have made quite a bit of progress. The Wall Street Journal and congressional historians say that this Congress has done more in 8 months than any other Congress since Reconstruction, since the 1870's, in over a century. We are not the imperial Congress that we were a year ago when the Democrats ruled this House, when Tom Foley was Speaker of the House. This Congress passed the Shays Act, so now Congress has to abide by the same laws as the rest of the country has to abide by. This Congress cut committee staff by one-third. This Congress passed term limits on committee chairmen so we do not have little empires inside of this Congress. This Congress passed term limits on the Speaker of the House. This Congress passed a ban on

proxy voting. And this Congress, I am sure, will have no problem with also passing a ban on lobbyist gifts, if it comes up at the appropriate time and place.

We have a challenge before us. I really think you would be hard-pressed to find a time in recent American history where this Congress was going to deal with as many important issues as we will be dealing with in the next 1 or 2 months.

We have an opportunity to do something this Congress has not done in 40 years: balance the budget. We have an opportunity to save Medicare. The trustees say it is going bankrupt. Almost half of the Congress is sticking their head in the sand and saying "Let's just hope it goes away," and the other half is daring to make a difference. Let us dare to make a difference on Medicare and save senior citizens from the pain that they will experience if we do nothing.

Let us pass tough welfare reform. Forget what the lobbyists and special interests say. Americans want tough welfare reform. We cannot be cowards; we have to be bold. We have to step forward and make a difference with the mandate that was given to us.

I will once again quote Bobby Kennedy, who in 1966 in Johannesburg, South Africa, said, "The future does not belong to those who are content with today, apathetic toward common problems and their fellow man alike, timid and fearful in the face of new ideas and bold projects. Rather it will belong to those who can blend vision, reason and courage in a personal commitment to the ideals and great enterprises in American society."

Today I make that commitment to make a difference, to make something happen, and boldly move into the 21st century with the values that created this country and Republic over 200 years ago.

THE GIFT BAN AND LOBBYING REFORM PROVISIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Connecticut [Ms. DELAURO] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, the House of Representatives is a House that is in need of repair. After decades of withstanding the heavy reins of special interests, lobbyists and gifts, our House has truly suffered. Our structure is not sound, and this once great institution is in danger of collapse. Today in fact, and my colleague who spoke a minute ago, I would say to him that today, we have an opportunity in this House. We have a historic opportunity to begin to rebuild this institution by passing gift and lobbying reform.

I think if there is anything that the American people want to see is that the Congress of the United States begins to live their lives the way working middle-class families in this country have got to live their lives. The Amer-

ican public strongly favors banning gifts from lobbyists to Members of Congress, and so do I. Perks and privileges demean this institution and every single person who serves here. That is not why we were elected to these offices. We are here to do the people's work, and we are well compensated for that. We do not need free vacations, free frequent flyer miles, free gifts, or free meals to sweeten the deal. Those working middle-class families that I talked about a moment ago, they are not getting anything free. They are paying and paying and paying. They are not able to keep their heads above water, and they are frightened to death of what is going to happen to themselves and to their families. For the first time in this country, that American dream is no longer there. Families are concerned that their kids are not going to get the same benefits and the same advantages that they have had.

We do need to enforce disclosure by lobbyists. The American people have the right to know what legislation these groups are attempting to influence and how much money they are spending on those efforts. I remind my colleagues that it has been the House that has traditionally led lobbying and gift reform efforts in the Congress. It is high time that we tackle these issues and join our colleagues in the other body in implementing serious gift and lobby reform. Some of us have already instituted a no-gift policy in our offices, because we feel so strongly about this. I can speak from experience; it is not that difficult to just say no to lobbyists.

Because the Republican leadership has repeatedly told us that the schedule for this season is full, this vote today will probably be our last chance to pass lobby and gift reform this year. Let us seize the opportunity to limit the influence of special interests on Congress once and for all. Let us take a definitive step to really reforming this institution.

So I urge my colleagues today to join me and others who are speaking here this morning to join us in this effort to defeat the previous question on the rule in order that the American people know once and for all that we are serious about repairing this House of Representatives. It is time to shore up these walls, to rebuild this institution. Let it be reflective of the people's interests, and not reflective of the special interests.

SUPPORT LOBBY REFORM

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

Mr. WARD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join my colleagues in strong support of lobby reform measures which have already been adopted by the other body. I want to thank the gentleman from Texas [Mr. DOGGETT] for calling this special order to address this very