

THE 104TH CONGRESS IS LEAST PRODUCTIVE SINCE WORLD WAR II

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentlewoman from Connecticut [Ms. DELAURO] is recognized during morning business for 5 minutes.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, today is BOB DOLE's last day in the U.S. Senate. I would like to salute the legacy of outstanding public service that BOB DOLE has given to this great country of ours.

While it is his last day, I truly do understand why he would like to depart the Congress of the United States. If we take a look at what has occurred in the 104th Congress, we can get some idea why anyone would want to distance themselves from this failed 104th Congress.

The gridlock strategies that have been imposed by the Speaker of the House, Mr. GINGRICH, have led to the dubious distinction for the GOP-controlled 104th Congress as the least productive Congress since World War II. By any measure, the 104th Congress has been a failure.

This lack of productivity of this Congress has been noted by neutral commentators. Helen Dewar of the Washington Post has written, "Their ambitions have far outstripped their legislative achievements, resulting in one of the least productive sessions in modern history, a session long on promise and short on results." Similarly Kevin Phillips, who is a partisan, a Republican analyst, has noted, "The 104th Congress may be the worst in 50 years."

First we can examine the number of bills that have been enacted, and as of June 11 this Dole-Gingrich Congress has enacted a total of 150 public laws, the lowest total at this point in the Congress going back to World War II. Second, not only have they failed to pass a number of laws, but what they have succeeded in doing is doing harm to men, women, and children in this country.

If we do not want to take a look at the numbers and numbers of laws that have been passed, that is fair. But what we do need to do is take a look at policy, and what kind of policy have they implemented and what kind of policy have they tried to derail. Let us take a look at that. By pursuing an extremist agenda, the Dole-Gingrich Congress has failed to deliver any kind of results to the American people.

Specifically, no health insurance reform, no minimum wage increase, no balanced budget, no expansion of access to educational opportunity, as a matter of fact, cutting off avenues of educational opportunity to young men and women in this country and cutting a school loan program. I could not have gone to college without student loans. Why do others who have them and had them in coming here want to let them go for others in this country? No welfare reform. No tax cuts. No improvements in pension security, and no improvements in environmental protection.

Let me tell my colleagues one specific area in which they will do and are contemplating doing great harm to the American public, and that is in the area of Medicare and Medicaid, hurting seniors in this country. All they are asking, after a lifetime of work and playing by the rules, is a decent and a dignified and a secure retirement.

Today on this floor we will discuss a budget resolution that has come back after being debated by the House and the Senate, and the stakes are high in this debate today because Medicare and Medicaid are going to be cut in a sweeping way if the Republican majority has its way, if Mr. GINGRICH has his way. Today 37 million seniors depend on Medicare, and we in the Congress have a solemn obligation to make sure that they can count on it. Medicare must be protected.

Medicare and Medicaid once again are on the chopping block, with a \$168 billion cut in the Medicare Program, \$72 billion in the Medicaid Program. Let me just say that today 99 percent of our seniors are covered through the Medicare Program. They have health insurance because of Medicare.

□ 0945

There are people here who would tell you they are not going to cut this program, and in fact that is precisely what they are going to do. They are going to remove the restrictions that are now placed on doctors and hospitals, where they cannot overcharge seniors. Those will be gone.

I implore the American public, listen to the debate today, and do not allow this Gingrich Congress to do harm to seniors in this country.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHAW). Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the House stands in recess until 10 a.m.

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 45 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until 10 a.m.

□ 1000

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at 10 a.m.

The Reverend Dr. Donald F. Christian, Office of the Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Washington, DC, offered the following prayer.

Almighty God, You are the giver of all that is good and the provider of all that is needed, so we offer our gratitude this day for Your many gifts and blessings. For the diversity of Your created order seen all about us in the animal, vegetable, and mineral worlds, for the beauty of life which can be observed in plants, the places, and the people of Your kingdom, our voices join together to proclaim our gratitude. Yet, we must also confess that we have sometimes allowed Your gift of

diversity to divide us and thereby allow animosity, hatred, and even bigotry to enter our lives and Your world. We acknowledge, that our sometimes frantic activity has permitted us to be less than grateful for nature's beauty of color and its symphony of music provided without cost to one and all alike. Good Lord, forgive us. So, we begin this day, with bowed heads and humble spirits accepting our dependency upon You, offering our gratitude for Your kindness, and seeking mercy for our shortcomings. 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.

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER. The question is on the Chair's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to the provisions of clause 5, rule I, further proceedings on this question are postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain fifteen 1-minutes on each side.

LET US GET TO THE TRUTH NOW ABOUT WHY THE WHITE HOUSE OBTAINED FBI FILES ON 349 REPUBLICANS

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

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, by now we all know about the White House's FBI files, background files, on some 349 Republicans here in Washington. A couple of them happened to be staffers that work for me. Now, only the White House knows why they asked for these files, and only the White House knows what they have done with these files over the last several years.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is time for the White House to come clean, to work with the FBI so that we have no more coverups, and that we get to the bottom of this truth on this issue now, not after the election in November.

AFRICAN-AMERICAN CHURCH ARSON

(Mrs. CLAYTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, there have been 32 suspicious fires at African-American churches across the United States since 1995. It is time for Congress to stand up and speak out.

Last Thursday, when the Matthews-Murkland Presbyterian Church in Charlotte, NC, became another one of the churches to be burned over the past 18 months, the shock and amazement of this deed left me dazed and numb.

How could anyone violate what is most precious to our society? That is why I want to urge all of my colleagues to use this week to rise in swift and resounding voices to condemn this evil and to demonstrate that it will not be tolerated.

First, we should all support the bipartisan legislation introduced by our colleagues, Mr. CONYERS and Mr. HYDE. That legislation would make it easier to bring prosecutions and stiffen the penalties against those who target houses of worship.

Second, I would urge support for a resolution I am introducing, calling on the collective outrage of Congress and condemning the arson. And, finally, we should all, work within our respective communities to help prevent future arson.

There is a time to keep silence and a time to speak. Now is a time to speak.

THE ANSWERS AND EXCUSES, MY FRIENDS, ARE BLOWING IN THE WIND

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

Mr. FUNDERBURK. Mr. Speaker, how many FBI files must a President search before he becomes a President? The answers and excuses, my friends, are blowing in the wind, the excuses are blowing in the wind.

How long must 341 files be kept until the Clinton administration has a chance to read them? The answers and excuses, my friends, are blowing in the wind, the excuses are blowing in the wind.

How many White House employees does it take to gather an enemies list? The answers and excuses, my friends, are blowing in the wind, the excuses are blowing in the wind.

Finally, how long does it take before the Clinton administration puts an end to all the coverups? The answer, Mr. Speaker, appears to be blowing in the White House wind.

OUR VETERANS DESERVE BETTER THAN EMPTY REPUBLICAN RHETORIC

(Mr. FILNER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, for over 50 years veterans' programs and benefits have been viewed as matters far too important for partisan bickering. Democrats and Republicans worked together to create the most generous and successful array of veterans' programs in the world.

Unfortunately, this bipartisan tradition supporting veterans' matters is in the process of being destroyed by our colleagues on the other side of the aisle. We have all heard and read the rhetoric put out by our Republican colleagues asserting their strong support for our Nation's veterans, and they have implied that President Clinton does not care about veterans; in fact, that he would balance the budget on the backs of veterans.

But, Mr. Speaker, let us look at the facts. The Republican budget that has been presented for fiscal year 1997 slashes the President's request for veterans' funding by \$573 million. Our Nation's veterans deserve better than empty Republican rhetoric. They have more than earned our real support and respect.

Mr. Speaker, let us quit playing games with this special group of citizens and get down to the hard work of establishing and maintaining meaningful programs and benefits for our veterans.

IT MAKES YOU WONDER, DOESN'T IT?

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

Mr. HEFLEY. Mr. Speaker, during the 1992 campaign, Bill Clinton was asked to sign a waiver that would have authorized the FBI to make public any files that revealed his anti-Vietnam war activity. He refused. In fact here is what his press secretary said at the time: "It's a personal file. He's not going to do it."

But after the election, after Bill Clinton was in the White House, suddenly all of his anxieties about looking through other people's FBI files disappeared into thin air. Someone at the White House authorized a search of 341 Reagan and Bush administration employees, including James Baker, the Secretary of State.

So, let me get this straight. The President who was morally indignant at anyone wanting to look at his FBI file, is now looking through the FBI files of his political opponents.

It makes you wonder, doesn't it, Mr. Speaker?

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WALKER). The Chair reminds Members that they are not to use personal references to the President of the United States.

WHITE HOUSE MISTAKENLY OBTAINS SECRET FBI FILES

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

Mr. TRAFICANT. The White House said they made a mistake when they improperly obtained secret FBI files on 339 Americans who just happened to be friends of Mr. Reagan and Mr. Bush. Mistake? Who is kidding whom here? This was a deliberate political act. It is disgusting. It is wrong.

But what really grabs me is how many ways can you destroy a family? Billy Dale, the boss of the travel office, targeted, fired, acquitted in less than 90 minutes. Shame, ladies and gentlemen. Whether it is a Democrat or a Republican, anyone who uses the power of the FBI and the IRS to target political opponents is not only wrong, they may have committed a crime.

There should be an investigation. And, as a Democrat, I say when we play partisanship with political machinations like this, we throw the Constitution out.

WHITE HOUSE "SO WHAT" RESPONSE

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

Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, it was reported over the weekend that the Clinton administration had used the FBI to obtain the confidential records of former Reagan and Bush administrations employees. The White House passed this off as a mere bureaucratic mistake; an oversight not to be repeated; really, just a small matter that is not worthy of a serious examination.

Mr. Speaker, I long ago stopped trying to figure out the Clinton administration. Their response to any accusation of improper or illegal activity is always the same: So what.

It goes something like this; Whitewater, so what. Troopergate, so what. Cattle futures, so what. Travelgate, so what. Cabinet members resigning in disgrace, so what. Twenty-two White House officials with legal defense funds, so what. Paula Jones, so what.

Mr. Speaker, the White House's "so what" response to the improper or illegal use of the FBI only confirms that they are hiding something from the American people.

REPUBLICANS SERVING WARMED-OVER VERSION OF REJECTED MEDICARE PLAN

(Ms. WOOLSEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I, for one, give the new majority credit for