

[From the Washington Times, May 7, 1997]
THE ART OF THE BALANCED BUDGET DEAL

(By Tod Lindberg)

My rule of political progress (which is not original to me) goes something like this: First, you lock in everything you can get; then you denounce it as grossly inadequate. If you get the order wrong, the perfect becomes the enemy of the good—and in an unholy alliance with the bad, the perfect crushes the good every time.

Therefore, I like the budget deal. Can I imagine a better one? Very easily; but I have no particular reason to think my musings are going to be enacted by Congress and signed by the president into law any time soon. The deal is the only game in town.

The budget deal before us would: 1) balance the budget by 2002; 2) do so while cutting taxes. The past four years have seen a huge shift in the terms of the fiscal debate in this country: from whether to increase taxes or not in order to reduce the deficit en route to a balanced budget (the animating principle of the disastrous 1990 budget deal and President Clinton's 1993 deficit reduction package, which passed Congress without a single Republican vote), to whether to cut taxes or not while balancing the budget—two points the president is now prepared to support. This deal codifies the latter two in law; to me, this is progress.

I'll leave the liberal arguments against the deal to the other side. But here are some notes on some of the conservative arguments against it.

It allows discretionary spending to grow. So it does, and that is not desirable. But there are now caps, and the caps prevent domestic spending growth from even keeping pace with inflation. That means real declines over time.

The spending caps become floors. They may; the task of fiscally conservative members of Congress will be to keep making the case that these caps are too high—against liberals who will say they are too low. But the conservatives would have had to make exactly the same case in the absence of this deal, too.

The reforms in Medicare are just price controls. Actually, so's the current system; nothing new there. We still need Medical Savings Accounts in Medicare and elsewhere. But surely there are some savings that can be extracted from the current system short of MSAs. Now we will see.

The deal doesn't reform Medicaid significantly. True; but this is a GOP problem as well as a Democratic problem. Governors from both parties hated the per-head caps that were under discussion. Medicaid needs reform no less (but no more) than it did before the deal.

The tax cut is small. Yep. But it's a tax cut, one that will apparently include a reduction in the capital gains rate from its current level (which is where it was when Jimmy Carter left office). The per-child tax credit, though not meaningful in terms of promoting economic growth, will mean a lot to the middle-income families who qualify for it. As for Mr. Clinton's favored college tuition tax credits, they are merely foolish, not dangerous. And none of the other tax cuts happens without his signature.

It enshrines government in its current bloated size and scope. Some folks seem to think that this is the end of politics for the duration of the agreement. That's simply wrong. The problem is that Republicans weren't able to articulate their thoughts on the size and scope of government in a fashion that voters found so compelling they were willing to turn over both the legislative and executive branches to the GOP. Conservatives will not be hindered in making that

case by an agreement that says government will live within its means while cutting taxes.

It's "balanced-budget liberalism." I don't think there is such a thing as balanced-budget liberalism. If the budget is balanced, liberalism has mutated into a less virulent species—by moving to the right. I think that merely shifts the center to the right, which is to the advantage of conservatives.

It relied on a \$225 billion cash infusion thanks to new revenue estimates. Less than people think. Of that \$225, about \$108 billion went toward inserting (tougher) CBO revenue projections. That's not spending. About \$20 billion of it went toward avoiding a legislative fix of the consumer price index, leaving a smaller fix possible under current law in the hands of the Bureau of Labor Statistics (I'd like to see CPI fixed altogether, but in the context of tax relief). About \$10 billion went to keep from fixing Medicaid, and (yippee) we get \$7 billion more in transportation. Bike paths for everybody! That leaves \$80 billion—a nice insurance policy.

Defense is getting cut too much. Yes. But the sentiment to increase it is not yet there. Proponents will need to make the case more urgently.

Mr. Clinton will be weaker, and the deal terms will be better, as the scandals unfold in the summer. Oh, promise me. Anyway, if that's true, Republicans ought to take the occasion then to stuff something down his throat he hasn't swallowed here. MSAs, maybe?

Birth of an entitlement: KiddieCare. Yes, that's quite bad. No point in pretending otherwise. Question: If there is no deal, can it be stopped? And does it really trump a balanced budget with tax cuts?

Perfect? Hardly. Progress? Definitely. After all, Rome wasn't burned in a day.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. YATES (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for today, Wednesday, May 7, after 7:30 p.m., on account of illness.

Mr. FILNER (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) after 3:30 p.m. today, and Thursday, May 8, on account of official business.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. MCINNIS) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. HULSHOF, for 5 minutes, on May 14.

Mr. BOB SCHAFFER of Colorado, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. METCALF, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. SHAYS, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. PAPPAS, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. MORELLA, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. HANSEN, for 5 minutes, on May 8.

Mr. MCINNIS, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Member (at the request of Mr. STUPAK) to revise and extend her remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mrs. KENNELLY of Connecticut, for 5 minutes, today.

EXTENSION OF REMARKS

By unanimous consent, permission to revise and extend remarks was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. MCINNIS) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. ROGAN.

Mr. EVERETT.

Mr. BONO.

Mr. GREENWOOD.

Mr. JENKINS.

Mr. GILMAN.

Mr. MCCOLLUM.

Mr. EWING.

Mr. HOSTETTLER.

Mr. MANZULLO.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. STUPAK) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. KUCINICH.

Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island.

Mr. BOYD.

Mr. FAZIO of California.

Mr. HAMILTON.

Mr. STARK.

Mr. TRAFICANT.

Mr. WAXMAN.

Mr. KENNEDY of Massachusetts.

Ms. CARSON.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas.

Mr. MCGOVERN.

Mr. POSHARD.

Mr. TORRES.

Ms. SLAUGHTER.

Mr. BENTSEN.

Mr. ACKERMAN.

Mr. WISE.

Mr. LEVIN.

Mr. LAFALCE.

Mr. HINCHEY.

Mr. GEJDENSON.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas.

Mr. ENGEL.

Mr. LANTOS.

Mr. GUTIERREZ.

Ms. PELOSI.

Mr. FORD.

Mr. COYNE.

Mr. KLINK.

Mr. RUSH.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 12 midnight), the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, May 8, 1997, at 10 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XXIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

3153. A letter from the Administrator, Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, transmitting the Service's final rule—Small Business Innovative

Research Grants Program; Administrative Provisions [7 CFR Part 3403] (RIN: 0524-AA08) received May 6, 1997, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

3154. A letter from the General Counsel, Department of the Treasury, transmitting a draft of proposed legislation to authorize debt buybacks and sales for debt swaps of certain outstanding concessional obligations under title I, Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act, pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 1110; to the Committee on Agriculture.

3155. A letter from the Director, Office of Regulatory Management and Information, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule—Paraquat; Pesticide Tolerances for Emergency Exemptions [OPP-300479; FRL-5713-2] (RIN: 2070-AB78) received April 30, 1997, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

3156. A letter from the Director, Office of Regulatory Management and Information, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule—Clomazone; Pesticide Tolerances for Emergency Exemptions [OPP-300481; FRL-5713-6] (RIN: 2070-AB78) received April 30, 1997, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

3157. A letter from the General Counsel, Department of the Navy, transmitting a draft of proposed legislation to waive certain provisions of title 10, United States Code, relating to the appointment of the Chief of Chaplains of the U.S. Navy; to the Committee on National Security.

3158. A letter from the General Counsel, Department of the Treasury, transmitting a draft of proposed legislation to authorize debt paybacks and sales for debt swaps of certain outstanding concessional obligations under the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 1110; to the Committee on International Relations.

3159. A letter from the General Counsel, Department of the Treasury, transmitting a draft of proposed legislation to authorize debt relief for poor countries, pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 1110; to the Committee on International Relations.

3160. A letter from the General Counsel, Department of the Treasury, transmitting the Department's final rule—Maintenance of and Access to Records Pertaining to Individuals [49 CFR Part 10] (RIN: 2105-AC57) received May 5, 1997, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight.

3161. A letter from the Director, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting the Office's final rule—Intergovernmental Personnel Act Mobility Program [5 CFR Part 334] (RIN: 3206-AG61) received April 30, 1997, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight.

3162. A letter from the Acting Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule—Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources of the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic; Catch Specifications [Docket No. 961204340-7087-02; I.D. 110196D] (RIN: 0648-A113) received May 6, 1997, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Resources.

3163. A letter from the Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule—Fisheries Off West Coast States and in the Western Pacific; Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery; Trip Limit Reductions [Docket No. 961227373-6373-01; I.D. 042397A] received May 6, 1997, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Resources.

3164. A letter from the Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule—Fisheries Off West Coast and Western Pacific States; West Coast Salmon Fisheries; 1997 Management Measures [Docket No. 970429101-7101-01; I.D. 042497B] (RIN: 0648-AJ09) received May 7, 1997, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Resources.

3165. A letter from the Acting General Counsel, Department of Justice, transmitting the Department's final rule—FY 1996 Police Corps Program (Office of Community Oriented Policing Services) [28 CFR Part 92] (RIN: 1105-AA47) received May 1, 1997, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

3166. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting the Department's final rule—Visas: Documentation of Nonimmigrants Under the Immigration and Nationality Act; Validity of Nonimmigrant Visas (Bureau of Consular Affairs) [Public Notice 2536] received April 28, 1997, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

3167. A letter from the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works), the Department of the Army, transmitting a report on the food damage reduction project for Las Cruces, NM, pursuant to Public Law 104-303, section 101(a)(20) (110 Stat. 3665) (H. Doc. No. 105-81); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and ordered to be printed.

3168. A letter from the General Counsel, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule—Airworthiness Directives; AeroSpace Technologies of Australia Limited (formerly Government Aircraft Factories), Nomad Models N22S, N22B, and N24A Airplanes (Federal Aviation Administration) [Docket No. 95-CE-31-AD; Amdt. 39-10004; AD 97-09-08] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received May 5, 1997, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3169. A letter from the General Counsel, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule—Classified Information: Revision [Docket No. OST-96-1427] (RIN: 2105-AC51) received May 5, 1997, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3170. A letter from the General Counsel, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule—Revocation of Class E Airspace; Goffs, CA (Federal Aviation Administration) [Airspace Docket No. 97-AWP-7] (RIN: 2120-AA66) received May 5, 1997, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3171. A letter from the General Counsel, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule—Fees for Air Traffic Services for Certain Flights Through U.S.—Controlled Airspace; Technical Amendments (Federal Aviation Administration) [Docket No. 28860; Amendment No. 187-8] (RIN: 2120-AG17) received May 5, 1997, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3172. A letter from the General Counsel, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule—Revision of Class D Airspace; Dallas Addison Airport, TX (Federal Aviation Administration) [Airspace Docket No. 96-ASW-34] received May 5, 1997, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3173. A letter from the General Counsel, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule—Revision of

Class E Airspace; Killeen, TX (Federal Aviation Administration) [Airspace Docket No. 96-ASW-35] received May 5, 1997, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3174. A letter from the General Counsel, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule—Revision of Class E Airspace; Weslaco, TX (Federal Aviation Administration) [Airspace Docket No. 96-ASW-36] received May 5, 1997, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3175. A letter from the Chief Counsel, Bureau of Public Debt, transmitting the Bureau's final rule—Offering of United States Savings Bonds, Series EE [Department of the Treasury Circular, Public Debt Series No. 1-80] received May 2, 1997, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

3176. A letter from the Assistant Commissioner (Examination), Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule—Mining Industry Excess Moisture [Coordinated Issue] received May 6, 1997, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

3177. A letter from the Chief, Regulations Unit, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule—Long-Term Care Services and Insurance [Notice 97-31] received May 6, 1997, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

3178. A letter from the Secretary of Transportation, transmitting a draft of proposed legislation to authorize certain programs of the Federal Aviation Administration, and for other purposes, pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 1110; jointly, to the Committees on Transportation and Infrastructure and Science.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. SHUSTER. Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. House Concurrent Resolution 49. Resolution authorizing the use of the Capitol Grounds for the Greater Washington Soap Box Derby (Rept. 105-90). Referred to the House Calendar.

Mr. SHUSTER. Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. House Concurrent Resolution 66. Resolution authorizing the use of the Capitol Grounds for the 16th annual National Peace Officers' Memorial Service (Rept. 105-91). Referred to the House Calendar.

Mr. SHUSTER. Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. House Concurrent Resolution 67. Resolution authorizing the 1997 Special Olympics Torch Relay to be run through the Capitol Grounds (Rept. 105-92). Referred to the House Calendar.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 5 of rule X and clause 4 of rule XXII, public bills and resolutions were introduced and severally referred as follows:

By Mr. BONO (for himself and Mr. GOODE):

H.R. 1542. A bill to provide certain immunities from civil liability for trade and professional associations; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. DELLUMS:

H.R. 1543. A bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to permit certain non-immigrant aliens to study in publicly funded