



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 105th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 143

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 1997

No. 12

House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore [Mr. GUTKNECHT].

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,

February 4, 1997.

I hereby designate the Honorable GIL GUTKNECHT 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 21, 1997, 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 not to exceed 30 minutes, and each Member except the majority and minority leader limited to not to exceed 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Mexico [Mr. RICHARDSON] for 5 minutes.

TRIBUTE TO FRANK TEJEDA, BRYANT GUMBEL, AND J.C. WATTS

Mr. RICHARDSON. Mr. Speaker, today I want to speak about three individuals, one Hispanic-American and two African-Americans: First, our departed colleague, FRANK TEJEDA who passed away courageously and with great dignity last week in his hometown of San Antonio, TX.

Congressman TEJEDA was a man of great dignity and distinction, but what made FRANK special was his quiet and unpretentious manner despite his distinguished accomplishments. Not only

will he be remembered for his admirable courage as a Vietnam veteran and a scholarly education at Harvard and Yale, but FRANK's true dedication and allegiance to the people of the 28th Congressional District of Texas will remain in the hearts and minds of his constituency.

In fact, whenever there was an issue affecting his district or whenever we needed a vote from FRANK TEJEDA, he would always say two words: Wilson County. Whenever he saw me on the House floor and we were trying to get a vote out of FRANK, this is what he wanted in return: his district, his people, the kind of allegiance and representation a good Member of Congress always shows. His relentless efforts to save Kelly Air Force Base will remain on the minds of every Member.

I will miss FRANK TEJEDA, as many of us will, especially when he stood or sat next to the gentleman from Texas, SOLOMON ORTIZ, as he always did on the House floor. These two were inseparable. FRANK's spirit will forever remain within the walls of this Chamber and within the hearts of all who knew him.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to rise in tribute to Bryant Gumbel. I wish to extend my enthusiastic congratulations to Bryant Gumbel, who has departed the "Today Show" after serving as its anchor for longer than anyone in the show's long, distinguished history.

The Emmy Award winner has excelled at bringing news and insight to millions of viewers here and around the world. His reporting has come not just from the studios in Rockefeller Center, but also from China, Australia, Moscow, Cairo, Tunisia, Buenos Aires, Havana, Saudi Arabia during the Persian Gulf war, a number of European cities, and the Olympic games.

I think one of Bryant Gumbel's most enduring contributions to his industry and, more importantly, to his country is a significant contribution to shatter-

ing the insidious barriers that once confronted African-Americans and other minorities in tuition broadcasting. He helped bring the change by being the best, both in sports and in news coverage. For that historic and proud achievement, we are all in his debt.

I am confident that his future plans, whatever they may be, will include a continuing contribution to his community and his country. Whether these plans include award-winning broadcasts like those he anchored from Africa, raising funds for the United Negro Fund, or quietly lifting the spirits of young people aspiring to be better, I know that Bryant Gumbel will be making this country a better place.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to pay tribute to the gentleman from Oklahoma [Mr. WATTS], our colleague, who will deliver the answer to the President's State of the Union Address.

There will be two eloquent speakers tonight, the President of course and J.C. WATTS. They will differ in views, but one of the sad parts of my job is that I will miss individuals not just on my side, but on the Republican side, like J.C. WATTS, that show class, commitment, dignity, outstanding athletic ability, and many other admirable qualities.

So, today, I want to pay tribute to FRANK TEJEDA, Congressman TEJEDA, who departed us last week; to Bryant Gumbel, an African-American who pioneered broadcasting and journalism, and to say that I will be one of the millions watching tonight the eloquence of two men and the grace of two men, President Clinton and our friend J.C. WATTS.

REINTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION TO END GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWNS FOREVER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 21, 1997, the gentleman from

□ 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

H247

Pennsylvania [Mr. GEKAS] is recognized during morning-hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, today I will be reintroducing a measure, which I have in every one of the last five sessions introduced at the very early part of the session. It has a simple premise, yet it is in the best interests of the search for better government, and I hope that we can as a body, together with the other body, see fit to imbed it into our body politic and into our legal system right at the start.

It is simply this, Mr. Speaker. We now have a situation where the fiscal year of the Federal Government ends on September 30, and legally under Congress' own laws we are compelled to pass a new budget by the next day, October 1. We have never, or perhaps only one time, accomplished that during the time that I have been a Member of Congress, since 1983.

Not only have we failed to do that, but on 53 occasions during my incumbency these last 14 years, on 53 occasions we have had to resort to temporary funding until a full budget could be put in place. Those temporary funding measures, called continuing resolutions, have become a way of life for the Congress of the United States, flaunting the very same law that the Congress itself put in to govern itself on budgetary matters and to bring a timetable end to the budgetary process every year, 53 times.

Moreover, since I came to Congress not only do we have these 53 occasions where we had to do temporary funding, but we had 8 Government shutdowns. That is the Government of the United States, the greatest power in the world that civilization has ever known, was shut down. We had no government in the United States during those periods of time.

Well, my measure, the one that I am reintroducing today, calls for an automatic resumption of the last year's budget or the House-passed version or the Senate-passed version, most recent of those, whichever is lowest in numbers, to take effect automatically on the day after the budget deadline comes into being. This would forever prevent the Government shutdown.

We added to it a feature this time around, in which you will see when you examine the bill and the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD reflecting it, that indeed the funding that will resume the next day after a budget deadline has been missed will be at 75 percent of the levels of the previous appropriation bill, previous budget, or the House or Senate passed version or even the President's proposal for the new budget.

Why do we have that in? At the suggestion of Senator STEVENS, of Alaska, the chief appropriator in the other body, we have adopted a 75-percent level which would give additional incentive to Members of Congress not to rest on the laurels of having passed an automatic budget reflecting last year's

numbers, but rather to give them incentive to proceed to finalize a budget with the priorities that they will be setting unencumbered, shall we say, by a full funding that would make them lax in the proposition that a new budget has to be adopted. So the 75-percent level is now a part of it.

One example serves to show the absolute ludicrousness of continuing down the path of these continuing resolutions and the possibility and actualities of Government shutdowns. In 1990, in December 1990, while we had amassed our—half a million of our young fellow Americans in the deserts of the Middle East, poised to do battle with the Iraqi aggressors in Kuwait, while they were poised and armed to the teeth, their Government, the United States Government, shutdown. Now that is abhorrently embarrassing, embarrassing to say the least, but absolutely horrendous if we look at it in its historic perspective, to have our young people with their rifles in hand with no government for which to fight. That is abysmal and something that we must correct.

So what are we going to do? We are going to try to mesh with the Senate's, the other body's action in this regard. I have the support of a strong handful of Members of the Senate who have introduced a package of their own following this line, and we hope that the Congress of the United States will at last adopt a measure that will end Government shutdowns forever.

EDUCATION IN THE 105TH CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 21, 1997, the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE] is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, tonight when President Clinton gives his State of the Union Address he is going to discuss his plan to prepare our country and our children for the 21st century, and the heart of this plan addresses an issue that I think is very much on the minds of most Americans and that is education.

The President's plan to strengthen our education system contains some of the very ideas that congressional Democrats developed last year as part of our families first agenda. As many Americans learned last year, the family first agenda is a comprehensive plan designed to improve the lives of the average American family, the mother and father who basically go out and work every day to provide for and improve the lives of their children.

At the center of the President's and also last year's congressional Democrats' education plan are two targeted tax breaks, a \$1,500 HOPE scholarship and a \$10,000 tax deduction for tuition and training. Now the HOPE scholarship program will provide all students with a \$1,500 refundable tax credit in

their first year of college and another \$1,500 in the second year if they work hard, stay off drugs and maintain a B average. While the \$1,500 was designed to meet the costs of the average community college, it can be put toward the costs of any tuition bill, not just the community college. And the goal we had in mind when we first developed this plan was not only to help pay for the costs of college, but to work toward making 2 years of postsecondary education as common as a high school education.

To complement the HOPE scholarship the President and congressional Democrats will be working to make a \$10,000 deduction for tuition for college, graduate school, community college, and certified training and technical programs. The deduction would be available on a per family basis—this is a little different than the per student basis in the past—and will be accessible for any year any family has education or training expenses. These targeted tax breaks, in my opinion, will surely direct us toward our goal of making education less expensive and more affordable for all Americans.

There are, however, other elements of the President's education plan that I would like to mention briefly, Mr. Speaker. One concerns the Pell grants. This year the President will propose, and I can assure you that congressional Democrats will support, the largest increase in Pell grants in 20 years.

Now the Pell grants of course are the foundation for student aid for low and middle-income families. The grant would, as proposed, the changes proposed, actually increase by 25 percent, raising the maximum award by \$300 to \$3,000. The President's proposal would extend eligibility for 218,000 new students over age 24 and raise the total number of Pell grant recipients to over \$4 million, and this is a significant achievement in my opinion.

With regard to the Stafford loan, which is the traditional national direct student loan program, the President will also propose cutting student loan fees from 4 to 2 percent on a need basis and some other changes in the Stafford grants that will basically make them more affordable.

There are other elements of the President's plan to make higher education more acceptable, more accessible I should say, and affordable for all Americans, including a tax free education savings program that would allow families earning less than \$100,000 to set up IRAs, individual retirement accounts, from which they can make penalty-free withdrawals for education.

All these things are basically working together to try to make it possible for more and more students to go to college.

I personally should say that I took advantage of the work-study program when I was in college, and the current work-study program is also expanded under the President's proposal, boosting the number of students who earn