

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

education dollars from the program to 1 million by the year 2000.

□ 1245

As you can see, Mr. Speaker, the President and congressional Democrats have an ambitious agenda to make college accessible and affordable to everyone, not just the wealthy, and I hope that in a bipartisan spirit we will see the Republicans join us in our efforts to improve the Nation's higher education system.

I just want to talk about one more thing that I think is important that the President will be talking about tonight, and that is the need for funding for construction. Right now about 60 percent of the Nation's schools are in need of major repair or outright replacement. The President's school construction, paid for within the context of a balanced budget, would jump start the process of improving the physical structures in which our children are taught. Under this plan, school construction would increase by 25 percent over the next 4 years.

A number of these Federal initiatives are needed, I believe, very strongly, and again, we are not talking about huge new programs that are going to bust the budget, but we are talking about very small initiatives that can really make a difference in the average person's life, and that is what our Democratic family first agenda is all about. The President will be talking about the education components and other components of it tonight, and I hope that we can see swift action in the 105th Congress on these initiatives.

CONGRATULATIONS TO SUPER BOWL CHAMPION GREEN BAY PACKERS

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

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to formally congratulate the Super Bowl champion Green Bay Packers and to thank them for finally returning the Vince Lombardi trophy back home to the State of Wisconsin where it belongs.

This season, Packer fans old and new watched the progress of the NFL's only community-owned team from the NFL's smallest city. It is a remarkable story as old as history: When David first slew Goliath, when Moses led his people out of Egypt, when 13 little-known small colonies took on the great might, the world power of Great Britain and King George and won their independence.

The Packer's success has rekindled the spirit of Green Bay and the entire State of Wisconsin, as well as the spirit of small towns and small cities across America. In an era when some professional athletes are failing as role models, the Packers organization consistently produces outstanding members of the community.

Take a look at Brett Favre's story. It is a remarkable story. A superstar who realized that he was addicted to pain killers, fought through that, won a second MVP award for the NFL, and then led his team on to the Super Bowl victory; and Reggie White, the catalyst, the glue, that held the team together, gave great pride to the entire Green Bay area and State of Wisconsin; one defensive man who probably dominated the sport more than any other defensive player in the history of the NFL, but who always reminded us also always, always remember who the glory belongs to, and that is to God.

Last week, over 100,000 people braved subzero weather for many, many hours waiting to welcome the Green Bay Packers home to their city as Super Bowl champions, and I think that story tells it all. That is why it is my great honor today to congratulate the entire Packer organization and their many, many loyal and patient fans, not only in Green Bay, but in Wisconsin and throughout the country and to honor the Packers and the remarkable achievement on the floor of the House of Representatives and before this Nation today.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the House stands in recess until 2 p.m.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 49 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Rev. James David Ford, D.D., offered the following prayer:

From the early days of the life of our Nation, we have prayed for Your blessing, O God, and we have asked to be sustained by Your benediction. In days of war and times of peace, in all the moments of human frailty and special courage we have paused to give You thanks. From women and men, from young and old, from north or south, from city and village, we have joined in our words of gratitude for Your providence to us and in our petitions for the welfare of our country.

As we now prepare for this new day, gracious God, let this time be full of hope for the year ahead as we seek a firm reliance on Your good word. May our hearts be bound together in unity as we pray in the words of scripture that in all things we will do justly, love mercy, and ever walk humbly with You. This is our earnest prayer. 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.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Washington [Mr. METCALF] come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. METCALF led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF AMENDMENT PROCESS FOR TERM LIMITS CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

(Mr. SOLOMON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, the Committee on the Judiciary has already reported House Joint Resolution 2, the term limits constitutional amendment. Copies of the joint resolution are available for review in the office of the Committee on the Judiciary.

The Committee on Rules is planning to meet early next week to grant a rule which may limit the amendments to be offered to the joint resolution. Any Member who wishes to offer a different version of the term limits constitutional amendment should submit 55 copies and a brief explanation by noon-time on Monday, February 10, to the Committee on Rules in room H-312 in the Capitol. Members are strongly advised to submit only amendments in the nature of a substitute. Members should use the Office of Legislative Counsel to ensure that their amendments are properly drafted and should check with the Office of the Parliamentarian to be certain their amendments comply with the rules of the House.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, January 22, 1997.

Hon. NEWT GINGRICH,
Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in clause 5 of rule III of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on Wednesday, January 22, 1997 at 11:10 a.m.

The Senate passed without amendment, House Joint Resolution 25.

With warm regards,

ROBIN H. CARLE,
Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives.