

CONGRESS' UNFINISHED BUSINESS
SHOULD BE ATTENDED TO

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

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to hear our colleagues on the other side of the aisle tell us that they want to keep government quiet and not do any business. One Member, in fact, was quoted as saying that this last session was a "legislative respite."

In fact, there is unfinished business; and the American people do want Congress to attend to that business, not the least of which would be prescription drug relief. Anybody that goes back to their district and talks to anyone, particularly seniors, understands that this Congress has been derelict in its duty to not address the high cost and lack of accessibility and affordability for prescription drugs, particularly to seniors.

Mr. Speaker, we have the Prescription Drug Fairness for Seniors Act that has not seen any action by this House, which some estimate would save 40 percent on the cost of prescription drugs. We have a health care delivery system that is in need of attention. The American people would be the first to step forward and say this is a role for government to come in and provide some focus and some attention and some direction. HMOs are in trouble. Hospitals are having difficulty making ends meet. They are closing down, leaving some patients in the position of having to drive miles and miles just to get emergency care and other relief.

We have the Patients' Bill of Rights that passed this House and now is languishing somewhere in the netherland.

Mr. Speaker, we need some unfinished business to be attended to.

OMNIBUS APPROPRIATION BILL
MAY CONTAIN TAX RELIEF FOR
ONE ALREADY WEALTHY MAN

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

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, every time we have one of these year-end omnibus appropriations bills, it always becomes sweetheart deal time.

The Washington Times reports on its front page today that the White House and some Members of Congress are attempting to give a \$238 million tax break to just one man, Abe Pollin, owner of the Washington Wizards basketball team.

Mr. Speaker, this tax break would help defray costs Mr. Pollin incurred in building the MCI Center, which he owns and from which he will make millions.

The Times story says, "The House and Senate are considering whether to include in an omnibus spending bill a retroactive, 5-year tax credit so narrowly tailored that it would benefit only Mr. Pollin . . ."

The Times quotes one Senate tax aide as saying, "My jaw dropped. It's so bad, it's not even funny. This is just gross."

Mr. Speaker, if Mr. Pollin pulls off this sweetheart \$238 million tax break, he is more of a wizard than his players. Mr. Speaker, no one should vote for a bill that contains an insider multi-million dollar tax break like this that benefits just one already very rich man.

DEMOCRATS CREATED SOCIAL
SECURITY

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

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I was listening very closely to the comments of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle this morning. I felt compelled to come down here again to once again, unfortunately, to those who watch C-SPAN on a regular basis, to give another history quiz, another history lesson.

Mr. Speaker, who was it back in 1935 that created Social Security? The answer is a Democratic President and a Democratic Congress. Only one Republican stood up and voted with the majority at that time to not recommit Social Security. A motion that would have destroyed and killed Social Security as we know it today. A gentleman by the name of Frank Crowther from my home State of New York stood up against the tide of his own party and said, "No, I will not destroy Social Security."

Mr. Speaker, Social Security was created because over 40 percent of the population at that time in our country were dying in poverty. They had nowhere else to go. They were dying in poverty.

Social Security has enabled young families to save, send their kids to school, to college. It has meant the wealth to this country, and now we expect the Republican side of the aisle to save it? Give me a break.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER
PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded that their remarks are to be addressed to the Chair, and not to the viewing audience.

FAT SHOULD BE CUT FROM THE
BLOATED WASHINGTON BU-
REAUCRACY

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

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, I want to take a minute to set the record straight. While the Democrat leadership was out of town yesterday raising money, we were fighting for American

families by strengthening education, our defense system, and protecting Social Security surplus.

We have heard a lot of wild accusations being thrown around, and I guess the liberals think that if they throw enough mud, maybe some of it will stick. But we are protecting the Social Security surplus, and we voted to ensure that by taking a 1 percent across-the-board savings.

Now, the liberals claim that our effort to trim waste and fraud and abuse in the Washington bureaucracy, and not threaten important programs, will somehow be overwhelming. But this plan will protect Social Security and restore fiscal responsibility in Washington. This is just a common-sense proposal that gives the Department and agency heads leeway to trim the waste, fraud, and abuse they find in their budgets. We are not mandating specific cuts, so if important programs get slashed and the administration suggests that it is the right thing to do, then because they have decided to do it, let it be.

Mr. Speaker, we all know that fat should be cut from the bloated Washington bureaucracy, and we can protect Social Security and Medicare by making sure the savings do happen.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
CANNOT COUNT

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

Mr. SCHAFER. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow the Department of Education will make an announcement that should concern every one of us. The Department will announce that since 1998, its books are unauditible.

This is an agency that receives an annual appropriation of \$35 billion and manages another \$85 billion in a loan portfolio. A \$120 billion agency that cannot account for its spending.

Now, I suggest that the President, when he comes back, he is in Turkey this week, and the minority leader when he comes back from the West Coast from his fund-raising expedition, when these folks come back to work, that they join the Republicans here to correct the mismanagement of the Department of Education. Because, Mr. Speaker, the children of America do count. Unfortunately, the Department of Education cannot count.

MINORITY LEADER SHOULD COME
HOME AND JOIN THE FIGHT TO
SAVE SOCIAL SECURITY

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

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, I am so sorry the gentleman from New York left the Chamber, because I would be happy to offer a current events quiz. Here is the question: Where was the

gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT), minority leader of the United States House, yesterday?

Answer: Raising campaign funds on the West Coast.

But I thought he wanted to reform campaigns. Oh, but not necessarily so. And besides, we all know, Mr. Speaker, that for that crowd to talk about campaign finance reform is a bit akin to having Bonnie and Clyde come out for tougher penalties against bank robbery.

But at any rate, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT) was away.

How can we get our work done? He should have a seat at the table, and he should join with us to save one penny on the dollar for every dollar of discretionary spending, so that the government can live within its means and quit the raid and continue to cease the raid on the Social Security Trust Fund.

Mr. Speaker, I would invite the minority leader to come back to town and go to work and join with us and realize that a penny saved is retirement security.

PARTIES TO THE BUDGET NEGOTIATIONS ARE AWOL

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

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I find it disappointing. As we try to bring this budget to conclusion, as we try to finalize the negotiations, we have major people that are a part of this process that are AWOL. They are absent.

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How does the Speaker of the House who has to negotiate with the President stay up late at night every night so he can call the President in Turkey? Is that the way to negotiate?

In Pennsylvania where I come from, if the governor or if his cabinet left town during those final negotiations, the press would have been all over them. Why is it possible for the President, the minority leader, who was away yesterday who is the one who is opposing any kind of trimming of waste or fraud, he is the one who is holding out, but he is not available to negotiate yesterday? That is why this process has run on. The President is just finishing his second trip abroad since October 1, and this is when we have been trying to finalize the budget.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, it is important for those who are a part of this negotiating process to stay in town, get the work of the American people done, so we can pass the budget that does not rob Social Security.

CONGRESS HAS MORE TIME THAN TAXPAYERS HAVE MONEY

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

Mr. THUNE. Mr. Speaker, it is November 17, and we are still here for one reason, and that is that we have got more time than the American taxpayers have money.

This Congress has passed all 13 appropriation bills. The President has chosen to veto 5 of those bills. Why did he veto them? Because they did not spend enough money. So we are still here negotiating with all the President's men since he is traveling abroad.

The minority leader is traveling in California raising campaign cash. We are still here until the President agrees with us on a budget that does not raid Social Security, does not raise taxes, and rids the budget of waste, fraud, and abuse.

We will stay here as long as it takes until the President gets back and the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT) gets back from his California dreaming.

FURTHER CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS, FISCAL YEAR 2000

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 381, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 381

Resolved, That upon the adoption of this resolution it shall be in order without intervention of any point of order to consider in the House the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 80) making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2000, and for other purposes. The joint resolution shall be considered as read for amendment. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the joint resolution to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations; and (2) one motion to recommit.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). The gentleman from Florida (Mr. GOSS) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MOAKLEY), my friend, the distinguished ranking member; pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration for this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate on this subject only.

Mr. Speaker, H.Res. 381 is a closed rule waiving all points of order against consideration of H.J.Res. 80, the continuing resolution that we have before us later today. The rule provides for 1 hour of debate, equally divided between the chairman and ranking member of the Committee on Appropriations. Finally, the rule provides for one motion to recommit.

Mr. Speaker, Members will know that this is an appropriate and traditional rule for a consideration of a clean continuing resolution. Members who have any kind of memory at all will remember that we have done these kinds of things recently in the past.

Given the complex negotiations that have been under way about the budget, and they have, indeed, been complicated by the fact that some of the principals are out of town for whatever reason, it is regrettable that, at a time that we are struggling so hard, that the President finds it necessary to be out of the country, and the minority leader finds it necessary to be out of the capital.

But, nevertheless, Americans come to understand that continuing resolutions, which keep the government functioning at last year's levels, are a necessary tool to facilitate bringing closure to the budget debate which we normally have this time of year.

In order to avoid a partial government shutdown, which we certainly want to do, we have proposed another straightforward extension in the deadline, and that is until tomorrow. We have made significant progress toward final agreement, but we must be certain that we do the right thing, not simply the most expedient to get out of town because the folks would like to go home.

In this case, the right thing is very clearly to provide for important government programs without touching the reserves in the Social Security Trust Fund, not one dime. That has been the goal of our majority from the outset of this year's budget process; and while it has taken some time to convince some of our friends on the other side of the aisle and downtown that this fiscal discipline is, indeed, necessary, we now have everyone working from the same set of guidelines. We just have to keep reminding them of the guidelines.

It has also taken some time to convince the White House that increasing taxes and using part of the surplus, as has been suggested by the White House, are not acceptable approaches to the majority on the Hill.

I am hopeful that this brief extension will provide both ends of Pennsylvania with the requisite time to hammer out our final spending bills in a responsible way. In fact, I understand that the bills individually, the five that have been vetoed by the President, are virtually resolved.

It is a no-nonsense CR that we are proposing here. I think it should be unanimously adopted. I am certainly urging a yes vote on the rule. I am not sure why we are having a rule instead of a unanimous consent; but for whatever reason, we are having a rule vote. I can think of no reason to vote against it. I urge a yes vote.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MOAKLEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I thank the slender gentleman from Florida (Mr. GOSS), my good friend, for yielding me the customary half hour.

Mr. Speaker, the end is finally in sight. Forty-eight hours after the start of the fiscal year, it looks as if the appropriation process is just about over.