for that voted to increase the caps for spending for this coming year to $645 billion. Now, that is more than the President has requested to spend.

Therefore, when you start talking about the budget, the President originally this year called for $637 billion in spending. My friends on the other side said you wanted to hold it to $625 billion. The Blue Dogs suggested a good compromise in between at $633 billion.

Our $633 billion got 170 votes. In fact, we had 37 of you voting with us on that. Forty-one more of you and we would not be here tonight arguing about the numbers, because we would have held spending at $633 billion, not at $645 billion.

Now, for about 16 years I was in the majority, and many times I voted with you, and I got criticized quite a bit for being the big-spending Congress. Well, I was voting with you. This year I did not vote with you, because $645 billion was $12 billion more than I thought we ought to spend this year. You are the ones that increased it.

Now, you can put up your chart. I have got a chart over here that will show absolutely, unequivocally, no matter what you are saying on this, that you will spend more than the President has asked. We can point the blame all we want to.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. STENHOLM. I yield to the gentleman from Oklahoma.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. Speaker, I have a question, not so much for the gentleman, because I have a great deal of respect for the fact he is indeed a fiscal conservative. Many of us are very upset that we are spending as much as we are. But if what the gentleman is saying is true, then perhaps what we ought to do is just go back and take the President's original request and pass them and send them down to the White House. Is the gentleman telling us that he believes the President would sign those bills in those amounts?

That is a simple question, because, if that were true, that is what we ought to do, and we could all go home. But I know the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM) knows this as well as I do, every day the bar gets moved. We are not even talking about what the President asked for. Most of the stuff that has been put in the bill right now is at the President's or White House's request.

We are upset we are going over the spending caps. We are now at over $1.9 trillion. We think that is enough. But every day the bar moves. When I have told some of our leaders, maybe we ought to go back to what the President asked for and give him exactly what he asked for, you know what they all say? He would veto it.

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, my point was this: if we had agreed on a budget with $633 billion in spending, you would have had a very large number of Democrats standing up with you on that. It is too late for that tonight. It is too late for that.

What I am saying is, your leadership seems to not be able to learn one constitutional fact: if you are going to beat the President, any President, now or any time in the future, you have got to have 290 votes. In order to get veto override numbers, you have got to work with somebody on this side of the aisle, which you have absolutely refused to even consider walking across the aisle to ask any one of us. And the Blue Dogs have given you not once, not twice, not three times, four opportunities to say, we want to work on holding spending down.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman would yield further, I would say to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM), I voted with you every time you put your budget up; and I want to tell you, your claim we would not be here I believe is in error, because this institution has a flaw in its design, and the design is it is easy to spend money and it is not easy not to spend it. If there is anything that needs changing in this Congress, it is the appropriations process, whereby staff members, not committee members, know what is in the bill, and backroom deals are done and the spending rises. That is the first thing.

The second thing is the House is gamed against the Senate, the Senate is gamed against the House, and then the President games them both, and the American people are getting a raw deal.

A CONTINUATION OF HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. HAYWORTH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to continue this discussion as we can with the time allocated. Let me yield more time to my friend from Oklahoma.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. Speaker, the fact is we passed a budget out of this House, and we passed the appropriation bills out of this House within $1 billion of that $601 billion. That is a fact. All 13 bills went out and went out on time.

Now, the question is, the question the American public ought to be asking is, what happened after it left the House? And I hope some day they will know how this process works and put people up here who will not allow it to continue.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I thank my colleague from Oklahoma. I thank my friend from Texas for his perspective. I think it is important to understand that there is far more that may unite us than divide us; and rather than pointing the finger of blame, I think it is important, after we await the verdict of the voters on the first Tuesday following the first Monday in November, if we should be fortunate enough to return to this institution, we certainly welcome our friend from Texas and other like-minded friends on that side of the aisle to join us in a governing coalition to work with the next President of the United States, who could very well be the Governor of my friend's home State, to work to unify and put people before politics and to deal with these real questions.

I do appreciate the fact that he offers a voice of fiscal conservatism. We may not see eye to eye always on tax relief or a variety of other issues; but by the by, I think there is a great deal of agreement, and I do look forward to that opportunity.

I yield to my friend from Georgia.

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I also want to say to my friend from Texas, I do appreciate, number one, your yielding time for a real dialogue tonight; and, number two, your consistency on trying to hold down the budget numbers, because I think amongst those here tonight, we are all in agreement with you.

Of the other issues that are on the table, though, one of the ones that concerns me and everybody else here, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HOEKSTRA), who is a chairman on the Committee on Education and the Workforce, is the President's scheme to federalize school construction. As you know, he wants to put in a big union pay-off and have Davis-Bacon in there and that will drive school construction costs up 25 percent on an average. We in rural south Georgia just cannot afford that. That is one reason why I think that we are here tonight, to put schools above politics.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I thank my friend. I think this is important, because knowing my friend from Texas and his fiscal conservatism, it simply makes more sense to make the money work harder. You do not do that when you artificially inflate prices for the cost of construction, or, worse still, when you take the authority for school construction away from local school boards and transfer that authority here to Washington.

In fact, I yield to my friend from Michigan, who has great oversight of this in his role in the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things that we found as we went and talked to local school districts, but also as we talked to the different State education boards, is that they typically get about 7 to 10 percent of their money from Washington, but they get 50 percent of their bureaucratic paperwork from Washington. So, for all of these 760 programs that come out of 39 different agencies that are targeted at our local classrooms, with each one of those there come costs, burden, and red tape and strings attached, telling local officials, this is what you need to do in your schools.

So what we wind up doing is focusing on process, rather than on what is good for our kids. The people who know our kids' names no longer have full control over what goes on in that classroom. It is time we put our kids before process, that we put learning before bureaucracy; and those are the kinds of issues that we are wrestling with with the president at this time.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Following the tradition of our friend from Texas, I gladly yield him some time to visit on these issues.

Mr. STENHOLM. I thank the gentleman for agreeing. Let me say I happen to agree with you on the Davis-Bacon provisions. I have agreed in the 22 years I have now been fortunate to serve here.

2145

I think it is a terrible mistake to include, especially the new provisions that will allow local board decisions to have Davis-Bacon applied. It has nothing to do with prevailing wage. I have always agreed that Federal contracts ought to receive the prevailing wage. But I have spent a good part of my career attempting to first repeal and then reform the Davis-Bacon act, to no avail. But I happen to agree with my colleagues on that.

I do not agree on creating a new revenue-sharing program for schools. I think we ought to concentrate the money for school construction. So I disagree with my Republican colleagues on that, but here reasonable people ought to be able to work that out, have the legislative process be allowed to work.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for that. I think again it typifies much of what we have heard about, in the midst of this so-called political season where there are honest disagreements.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTIONS 121, 122, 123, and 124, EACH MAKING FURTHER CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2001

Mr. DREIER (during the special order of Mr. KINGSTON), from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 106–1015) on the resolution (H. Res. 662) providing for consideration of certain joint resolutions making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2001, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF S. 2485, SAINT CROIX ISLAND HERITAGE ACT

Mr. DREIER (during the special order of Mr. KINGSTON), from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 106–016) on the resolution (H. Res. 663) providing for consideration of the Senate bill (S. 2485) to direct the Secretary of the Interior to provide assistance in planning and constructing a regional heritage center in Calais, Maine, and providing for the adoption of a concurrent resolution directing the Clerk of the House of Representatives to make certain corrections in the enrollment of the bill (H.R. 2614) to amend the Small Business Investment Act to make improvements to the certified development company program, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

A CONTINUATION OF HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. GUTKNECHT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, I want to come back to this question. I will be happy to yield time to any of my colleagues who are here on the floor, but I really do think this is the question: how much is enough? I say that because I was a member of the State legislature in Minnesota; and I must say, since I came to Washington 6 years ago, and we have always had a situation where the President was of the Democratic Party and the Congress, since I came, has been in control by the Republicans, and that has caused more friction perhaps than it really should. But I was in the State legislature when we had a Republican Governor and a democratically controlled legislature, and we were somehow able to get things done. I mean I do not understand why it is that we have to have this grid lock. I do think this is part of the question, and I also agree that there are other questions that need to be resolved. But it seems to me, and I agree with my colleague from Texas, reasonable people ought to be able to work this out.

We said originally in our budget resolution, we thought we could legitimately meet the needs of the Federal Government and all the people who depend upon it for about $1.86 trillion. My colleague has pointed out that we have already exceeded those spending caps. That bothers me. But we are all now saying, at least most of us are saying, that what we at least ought to do as we see more and more surpluses piling up, this year, at least, that 90 percent of that surplus ought to go to pay down debt. I think just about everybody agrees with that.

When we look at basic things, there is not that much to argue about. It comes down to some simple things, as we saw on the chart. The numbers we have in terms of education are almost identical to what the President asked for. This is not a debate about how much we are going to spend on children. It is a debate about who gets to do the spending. We simply believe more of those decisions ought to be made by people who know the children's names. I do not think that is an unreasonable thing.

Then we are having this debate about whether or not we ought to grant blanket immunity to illegal aliens. I do not think many people in this room right now think that is a very good idea. In fact, I think if we polled the people back in southeastern Minnesota, they would say that is a crazy idea. But now the President is threatening to veto the Commerce, State, Justice appropriation over that issue.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield, just to reiterate what has been agreed to, and I think it is important for those of us who hail from Arizona, Texas, other border States, what we have agreed to is a family unification process, because we do not want to see families separated, but by the same token, when it comes to this notion of blanket amnesty, we have a problem when we are dealing with ignoring what is already illegal. And that is where the sticking point comes, and while we have had a reasonable approach, bipartisan, to deal with family unification, I would just make that key distinction as we are dealing with the amnesty question.

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield, I want to go back again to the gentleman's ''How much is enough?,'' and remind everyone again, that question has been decided.

The House spoke by majority will that $645 billion is enough; therefore, it is not a relevant argument. The immigration question is a relevant argument. Davis-Bacon applications to school is a relevant argument. There are other relevant arguments, but there is no argument now, at least on the majority side, and I will say not with me either, because once the House has spoken and it is October 29, we cannot go back and redo the budget. Mr. Speaker, $645 billion is the number, and that is more than the President requested.

My only point, had we had this kind of conversation early on and more had joined, as the gentleman from Oklahoma joined with us earlier, we would not be arguing about $645 billion would be enough, we would be arguing that $633, and perhaps we would still be arguing about the other questions, but reasonable people can work those out, and surely our leaders, negotiating as we speak, are finding a compromise on those issues that will be acceptable.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, my colleague from Texas says that we are agreed, but I do not know if the President is agreed, because he has never told us exactly how much he wants to spend in some of these areas that are still being negotiated.

Let me just come back to my point about the State legislature.

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman would yield again on that